

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly Issue 295 13 November 1997

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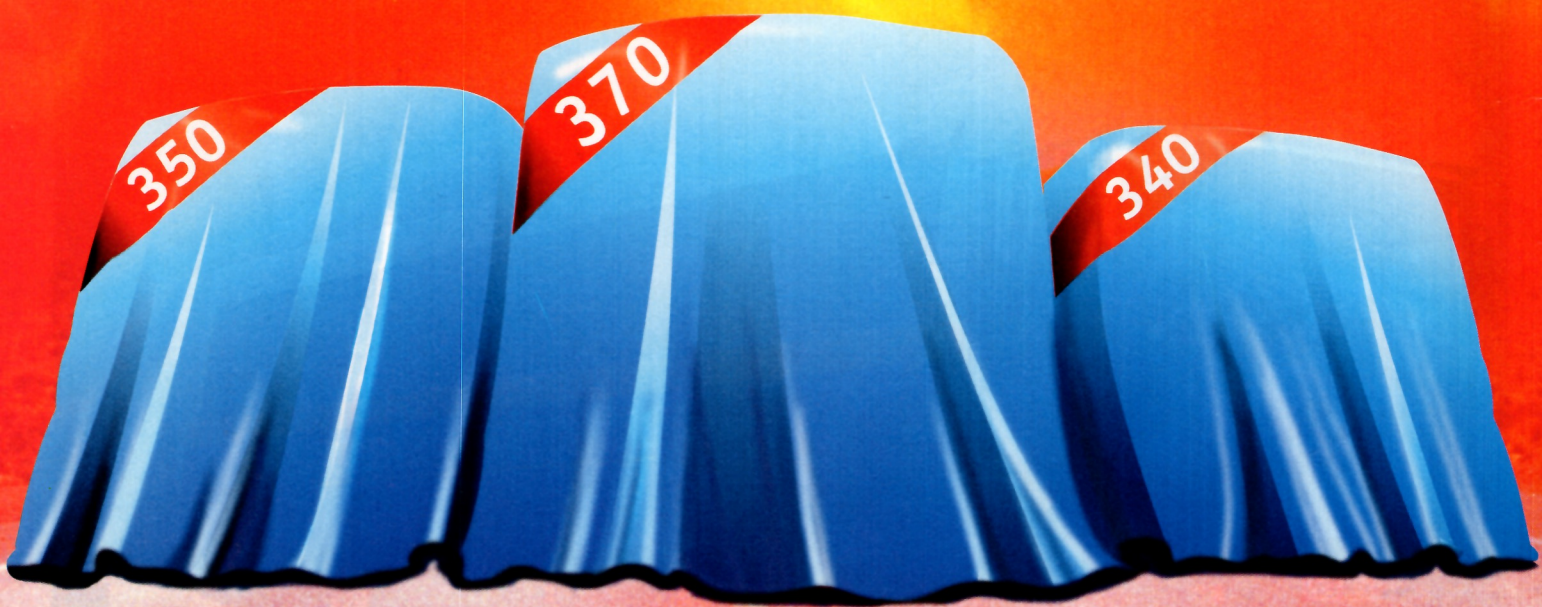


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EDITORIAL

Industry deserves better

COACH SEATBELTS have rocketed to the top of the agenda with alarming regularity. First we had the big push to make them compulsory, then the unsatisfactory two-stage legislation which forced a large scale retrofit programme on the industry, followed by the 'best practice' guidelines in December 1996. Now, with three months before the 10 February 1998 deadline for seatbelts to be fitted to pre-1988 coaches used on school transport, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions is consulting on the rules.

It's a bit like printing the laws of the game during extra time at the FA cup final. We all know that legislation can not be retrospective... but moving the goalposts and redefining the size of the pitch after 105 minutes of football is certainly not sport as we know it.

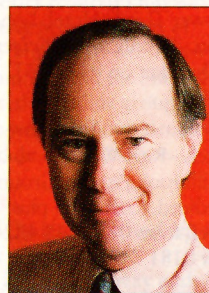
Logic, commonsense, good practice - call it what you will - but surely the Department of Transport should have got its act together before now? We have said many times on the pages of this magazine that the coach and bus industry has been badly served by the whole seatbelt episode. However, this latest move adds insult to the damage already done.

If the Government's intention was to introduce a set of regulations governing the fitment of seatbelt in coaches and minibuses it should have been done from day one. Operators should not have been left in the dark, and the seatbelt retrofit industry should not have been forced to spend thousands on testing to ensure that they meet what they had to assume were the correct regs.

The industry has been crying out for guidance for almost three years. However, for rules to be introduced at this stage is a disgrace. Why has it taken so long to get the department into gear?

To talk in terms of a seatbelt time bomb is no exaggeration. There are thousands of coaches which have already had seatbelts fitted. Come the first MoT test after 10 February, 1998, these belts will be checked and, despite being fitted according to 'best practice' and in most being fully tested installations by properly qualified fitters, they risk failure.

The industry is on the brink of being thrown into turmoil. It wouldn't be so bad if the proposed new standards were sensible but they are not... as you can find out for yourself in this week's news pages.



MIKE MORGAN, *Editor*

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events

19 November: The Future of Transport Policy, conference organised by Labour environment group SERA. transport minister Dr Gavin Strang to give keynote speech. Westminster Central Hall, London, 1030 hrs to 1715 hrs. Details from John Watson on 0171 263 7389, fax 0171 263 7424

21 November: National Planning Aid Conference, Gateshead Civic Centre. Details on 0191 222 7812

25 November: Omnibus Society meeting - Stagecoach, a worldwide company by Stagecoach East London chairman Roger Bowker. London Transport HQ, 55 Broadway, London SW1, 1845 hrs. Details from Barry Le Jeune on 0171 918 3295

24-26 November: CPT Annual Conference, 'Operating for Quality - Sustainability and the Environment', Glasgow Thistle Hotel, Glasgow. Details on 0171 240 3131, fax 0171 240 6565

24-25 November: National Transport Review, CIT/Waterfront Conferences, Radisson SAS Portman Hotel, London. Keynote speaker Rt Hon John Prescott MP. Contact Paula Blay, tel 0171 233 7600, fax 0171 233 7611

26 November: Transport Telematics - Contributing to New Transport Policies. One-day conference at The Tower Thistle Hotel, London. Details from Shereen Whittaker on 0171 233 7600

2 December: Alternative Fuels - Real World seminar, Millbrook Proving Ground, Bedford. Cost £195 plus VAT, from 0181 743 4224, fax 0181 743 3133

23 January 1998: CBW's Coach Industry Awards, Metropole Hotel, NEC. CBW's Coach Industry Awards, Metropole Hotel, NEC. Details from Kate Dalton, Eventon, 5 Fenlake Business Park, Fengate, Peterborough PE1 5QB, tel 01733 311599, fax 01733 343310

Stansted-based operator grows by 400% as it picks up

Travellers' assets go to Stort Valley

By Mark Williams

AS EXPECTED Stort Valley has bought the assets of troubled Travellers Coach Company (CBW, 6 November).

The deal involves the transfer of modern, leased premises at Hounslow and more than 40 coaches - on operating and purchase leases. Stort Valley, set up five years ago, operates a relatively small fleet, including ten leased Javelin Premiere 320s, from a base at

Stansted. The ink was still wet on the contract when CBW spoke to Stort Valley director Simon Underwood: "It's too early to say what direction the business will take," he said. "At present, the bulk of the turnover is from incoming tourists at Heathrow."

Mr Underwood - who runs Stort Valley with Andy Mahoney - said they had been looking for a London base for some time: "We hadn't expected to be buying something quite so big, and

it brings with it a lot of work," he added.

Stort Valley is likely to continue to use the Travellers name, though it is still unclear whether the company will be run as a subsidiary of Stort Valley or incorporated. Mr Underwood and Mr Mahoney - both Hertfordshire men - say they will be announcing their plans once they have had further opportunity to examine Travellers' current trading position.

The bulk of Stort Valley's

turnover is currently from express coach work into London, with a significant amount of concert travel, private hire and airport transfer. Travellers Coach Company Ltd is in the hands of receiver Warren Epstein, of Stow Haywood.

● It is understood that Travellers Coach Company and Tony Grayson - taken ill during negotiations with Stort Valley - has a serious heart condition which may require triple bypass surgery.

Belt MoT is 'flawed'

SEATBELT-EQUIPPED COACHES risk MoT failure despite meeting approved and tested standards if the proposed new regs are adopted by the Government.

The late publication of standards for checking seatbelts on coaches and minibuses has resulted in widespread alarm throughout the industry and one of this country's top legal experts has condemned the proposals as "flawed and confused".

The proposed standards contained in a consultative document 'Checking Seat Belts in MoT Tests', "appear to be based on inadequate testing," according to Manchester solicitor Geoffrey Smith.

"You would expect Government to have carried out adequate research, but there is no evidence of this in the consultation document," he said. "There should be a challenge to produce evidence of testing that is the basis for the standards they have set down."

"The industry should know what tests were carried out, how many vehicles were tested, where the tests were carried out, and on what vehicles."

Although consultation closed last Friday, Mr Smith says it is not too late because Government "would be very unwise to ignore representations from the industry."

The proposed rules come just three months before the 10 February 1998 deadline for fitment of seatbelts in pre-1988 coaches used on school transport and nine months after the imposition of belts on younger coaches and all minibuses.

Proposals include: a seatbelt condition



MIRA test may not be enough for MoT

check included in the MoT test from next February; and an initial one-off check on the quality of installation for all seatbelts fitted in coaches, buses and minibuses.

The timing of the proposals provoked strong criticism from the Confederation of Passenger Transport which says the Department of Transport is three years late. In a detailed reply it said: "CPT would probably have supported the proposed test standard in principle, even if not in detail, had it been issued in 1994 before many operators had started to fit belts. However, CPT is now aware that some of the detail will make some installations unacceptable to DETR despite the fact that they have been tested and have achieved M2 or M3 standards."

Clydeside gets Bridge

CLYDESIDE Buses of Renfrew has acquired the business of a local coach operator, Bridge Coaches, for an undisclosed sum.

Clydeside's acting md Tony Williamson told CBW the deal offered him opportunities to extend services into new Erskine areas. The company name disappears with the business, being absorbed into the Clydeside set-up.

TWM in London

TRAVEL WEST MIDLANDS has won its first London Transport Bus contracts... with a new trading name Travel London.

Routes 211 Waterloo Station-Hammersmith, and C1 Victoria-Kensington High Street - currently run by London General - will be operated with as yet undecided single-deck, dual door buses, and with brand-new Optare Solo lowfloor midis.

The new Travel London subsidiary will be run from parent company National Express's Gatwick Express depot. The contracts start in June, and run for seven years.

remnants of 40-vehicle business from receivers



Stort Valley: gets assets only in Travellers deal but will keep name says Stort director

FirstBus takes to the air with bid

FIRSTBUS looks like joining National Express in taking a stake in an airport.

The second-biggest bus operator has been named preferred bidder for 51% of Bristol International Airport, currently owned by Bristol City Council, which will retain 49%. There are plans to almost double its capacity and provide extensive public transport links in the area - largely dominated by FirstBus operators.

At present, BIA carries 1.5 million

passengers a year and handles a large amount of air freight through Royal Mail's Skynet distribution. It also operates extensive bonded warehousing and storage facilities.

Plans to construct a new terminal will increase its capacity to 3 million passengers, and installation of all-weather landing instrumentation will enhance reliability.

"We are delighted to have been selected as BCC's preferred partner in connection with the future develop-

ment of BIA," said FirstBus chairman Trevor Smallwood. "BIA offers us an exciting diversification opportunity into a sector of the public transport market which has excellent growth prospects and which compliments our existing bus and rail opportunities."

● FIRSTBUS's Grampian Transport picked up Bus Operator of the Year at the annual Bus Industry Awards, presented at the Dorchester Hotel in London. Runner-up was PMT of Stoke on Trent.

Shearings all-Volvo order

TOURS giant Shearings Holidays, has firmed up its coach orders for 1998, by confirming an £8 million investment in 54 vehicles, which includes the 30 coaches already announced (CBW, 2 October).

In a multi-sourced order, the 54 Volvo B10Ms will be bodied by Plaxton, Van Hool and Jonckheere, the majority of which will be equipped for UK holiday operations, with the number of seats reduced from 53 to 50 in order to increase legroom and comfort standards.

Fifteen Van Hool T9s will also be built to European specification with air

conditioning, toilet, servery and 46 seats. The UK tour coaches will comprise 20 Jonckheere Mistrals and 19 Plaxton Excaliburs.

The new vehicles will replace the last of the 1991 Volvo / Van Hools and 1992, Scania / Plaxtons, as well as some newer coaches. Fleet strength will remain around the 300 mark, but with a larger proportion of UK touring vehicles.

Tour services director Jimmy King said that with the exception of one Excalibur purchased in 1994, all three body types would be new to the group. "With manufacturers building



Older coaches will be replaced as fleet stays around 300

new and exciting ranges, we felt next year was a good opportunity to try three of them out," he said. "This will be the largest coach order by any UK operator

next year, and reaffirms our commitment to providing Shearings' coach holiday customers with the highest standards of safety and comfort."

INSIDE TRANSIT THIS WEEK

NEWS

Gavin Strang has announced new Objectives, Instructions and Guidance for Rail Franchise Director John O'Brien. In a move that could allow some state or local government operation of passenger trains when franchises are due for renewal, Strang makes it clear that passenger interests are supreme.

Richard Branson's Virgin Rail has signed a deal which will allow it to double frequencies and run 140mph trains on the West Coast mainline. It has also called press reports that it suggests raising fares by up to 37% complete nonsense.

British group GB Railways is part of a consortium that is taking over the operation of a major railway in Australia. Its only UK franchise, Anglia Railways is also operating well and in line with its expectations to ensure that the Group has the ability to stand alone in the rail franchise world.

It seems the writing is on the wall for the Leeds Supertram and despite some local support the necessary funding will not be found. The future is much more rosy for guided buses in that City though with further developments in the offing.

Stagecoach is working to offer reduced fares for young people as part of the 'welfare to work' programme. And the Sheffield based Mainline group is the subject of our detailed and in depth analysis.

PLUS

All the latest job and tender classified ads.

The new railway and the bus industry are now moving forward in an ever more political environment. Are you keeping up to date? Fill out the subscription form on the inside back cover to make sure that you know what Transit knows this week.

in brief

■ **NEW,** lightweight minibus and coach seats made by Swansea-based Cogent Passenger Seating have been approved. The seats - at 12.95kg and 14.95kg - feature integral seatbelts and a new structural design which in Concor guise meets M2 minibus standard, and in the Eagle model, M1 coach standards.

■ **TRAFFIC** grew 4% in the third quarter of this year, and light goods vehicle traffic 7%. Forecasts are for much higher traffic growth overall that the 3% annual change seen during the early '90s, says a new report from the DETR... as much as 5%.

■ **BIRKENHEAD'S** new bus station has picked up a commendation in the Structural Steel Design awards. The Buro Happold-designed bus station is adapted to disabled use, with extensive covered and enclosed waiting areas.

■ **LONDON TRANSPORT** has won three awards for its fare evasion advertising. LT got silver for its Midwife poster campaign, a Best Photography award for the campaign from Design and Art Directors, and a bronze in the Best Poster awards from the Creative Circle. LT used BST.BDDP advertising agency for the campaign.

■ **SUFFOLK'S** first park-and-ride bus service, in Ipswich, was launched by Glenda Jackson MP, minister for transport. Ipswich buses is running four new buses on a ten-minute frequency along the London Road. The service is supported by Equity Estates, and offers a new waiting area and bicycle park.

■ **TRAVEL DUNDEE** and ScotRail, both National Express Group companies, have set up a through ticketing arrangement. Passengers to and from Dundee can buy combined rail and bus tickets at Travel Dundee's travel shop, and at rail stations in Scotland.

PSV sales up in October

Regs get a late boost

By Mike Morgan

WITH two months to go before the year end, coach and bus registrations have received a late boost with almost 50 extra vehicles taking to the road last month.

Whereas in October 1996 the total number of full-size PSVs registered amounted to 249, this year the total is 298, taking the year to date figures up to 3264 to record an overall increase of 4.2 per cent.

However, it is the buoyant bus sector which is helping to keep up the high levels of confidence among the manufacturers while the coach market continues its roller-coaster ride.

Despite a decline in the coach market of around 14 per cent during the first

three-quarters of this year, there was a reversal of fortunes in October when coach registrations leapt by 7%. However, Volvo's sales slipped from 32 to 23 last month, taking its market share down from 53.8% to 46.9%. On the other hand Dennis has boosted its share from 14.6% to 17.5% and Scania has slipped from 9.4% to 8.3%. Meanwhile DAF Bus has restored its position with registrations of four coaches taking its total to the same level as 1996. Registrations of Bova and Iveco Bus are both on the increase.

Dennis and Volvo continue their close-run battle for leadership in the bus sales league. Dennis registrations in October were ahead of its rival by 12 last



Coach and Bus Registrations						
	October		1997	Year to Date		
	1997	1996		%	1996	%
Volvo	126	120	1408	43.1	1330	42.5
Dennis	120	80	1114	34.1	959	30.6
Scania	15	12	193	5.9	260	8.3
Optare	13	22	185	5.7	207	6.6
DAF Bus	7	0	115	3.5	126	4.0
Bova	2	0	46	1.4	40	1.3
Mercedes-Benz	3	2	28	0.9	30	1.0
Iveco Bus	0	1	28	0.9	23	0.7
MAN	5	2	18	0.6	37	1.2
Others	7	10	129	3.9	119	3.8
Total	298	249	3264	100	3131	100

Coach						
Volvo	23	32	483	46.9	641	53.8
Dennis	5	3	180	17.5	174	14.6
Scania	3	1	85	8.3	112	9.4
DAF Bus	4	0	85	8.3	85	7.1
Bova	2	0	46	4.5	40	3.4
Iveco Bus	0	1	28	2.7	23	1.9
Others	7	4	123	11.9	117	9.8
Total	44	41	1030	100	1192	100

Bus						
Dennis	115	77	934	41.8	785	40.5
Volvo	103	88	925	41.4	689	35.5
Optare	13	22	185	8.3	207	10.7
Scania	12	11	108	4.8	148	7.6
DAF Bus	3	0	30	1.3	41	2.1
Mercedes-Benz	3	2	28	1.3	30	1.6
MAN	5	2	18	0.8	37	1.9
Others	0	6	6	0.3	2	0.1
Total	254	208	2234	100	1939	100

The above table details all vehicles on designated PSV underframes registered last month in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Source SMMT

month giving it an 11-vehicle lead in the year to date. These two manufacturers account for more eight out of every 10 full-size buses

sold in the UK and, in a growth market, their combined share is following an upward curve at the expense of other contenders.



Head to head: Dennis and Volvo together account for eight out of every 10 full-size bus registrations

New mobility Romobus has brawn and beauty

A LOWFLOOR minibus designed for the mobility market has been developed by Roehill Bodies of Andover.

The 15-seat vehicle, type tested to M2, uses Fiat's Ducato as a base but there the similarity ends. From the wings back, it sports a purpose-made chassis and fully coachbuilt body.

The minibus follows in the footsteps of Peugeot's original Freeway conversion, which sold several thousand into local authorities and mobility specialists. Roehill has set itself a modest production target of 50 for 1998, but says it already

has firm inquiries for 25.

"The principle of the vehicle - which has come to be known as the Romobus - is that it retains as much of the short wheelbase donor vehicle as possible, including the front end and the windscreen," said chassis development engineer Ian Knight.

"From the cab back, it's got a galvanised, bolt-together chassis, with steel-framed body in GRP and aluminium. It has specially-made air suspension from Drinkwater which gives the vehicle a lowered floor height of 300 mm."

One issue which Roehill has given particular attention is the appearance: "We didn't want to make another 'welfare' minibus which looks like nobody else would travel in. I'm biased, but I think it looks fantastic," said Mr Knight.

Price is expected to be around £38,500, substantially undercutting many other lowfloor designs, and a few van conversions.

● Full details of Romobus and the first pictures in CBW next week - don't miss our CTA Show review.

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Fire may shut firm

THE future of a Swadlin-cote operator was in the balance last week after a suspicious fire destroyed three school coaches.

Bill Parker, of Parkers Coaches and Taxis, says his insurance policy would only pay £8,000 of the £22,000 cost of replacing each vehicle: "I really feel like packing the whole thing in," he told a local newspaper.

Contracts were covered by Fletchers Coaches of Burton while Mr Parker attempted to find replacement vehicles.

New owners at Cooks

FORMER Southern National managers Paul Landymore and Nigel Billinger have taken the reins at Cooks Coaches of Wellington, Somerset.

The pair struck an agreement with the owners, Ian and Jill Cook, earlier this year in readiness for the Cooks' retirement. They get a 17-vehicle fleet, much of which is on school contracts, and private hire which the two new owners feel can be developed. "We are looking at a number of options, the expansion of private charter work being one," said Mr Landymore.



Frasers' crash: decker 'toppled over' after moving to the side of the road to allow a service bus to pass

The verge of disaster

By Robert Izzard

A DOUBLE-DECK bus carrying 70 schoolchildren left the road and fell on to its side at an accident black spot.

The 20-year-old double-decker, operated by Frasers of Munloch, was taking children on the early morning run to Fortrose Academy, at Fortrose, Easter Ross. Twenty five children and one

adult were taken to hospital in a fleet of ambulances, although all were released after treatment.

The injured adult was a lady who stopped to offer assistance at the scene, and broke her ankle as she jumped over the fence to help the injured.

The school bus travelling to Fortrose is believed to have been passing a service

bus when the accident occurred, on a narrow road section which escaped widening of the road 10 years ago.

"It is very narrow," parent Ruth Lees told CBW. "When two buses meet, they both have to slow down."

The headmaster of the school, Fortrose Academy, said that the verge had recently been dug up for a

ditch for British Telecom cables: "It was not all that well compacted," said Douglas Simpson.

"After leaving the road, the bus then came to a standstill, as I understand it, and all the passengers heaved a sigh of relief. Then they felt the bus continue to topple over."

As a result of the accident, the school bus has now changed its route.

Moseley's son goes to Bova

KARL MOSELEY, son of Moseley PCV managing director, Vin Moseley, is to join the Bova manufacturing company in the Netherlands early in the New Year as manager of international sales and assistant to Rik Pronk, international sales director.

During the last three years Karl Moseley has been selling Bova Futura coaches while he has been Moseley PCV's sales executive covering west/east midlands and North Wales.

In his new appointment based in Valkenswaard, his role will be to develop east-



Karl Moseley is replaced

ern and non-European territories for the Bova range.

Mr Moseley said: "I am sorry to be leaving so many good friends in the industry but I look forward to the new challenge with Bova and, who knows, I might be back."

Meanwhile his position at Moseley PCV has been filled by John Wolfindale



...by John Wolfindale

who is a salesman of many years experience, having previously represented Jonckheere (UK) Ltd and Hughes DAF.

Mr Wolfindale said: "It is nice to be back with Vin Moseley and so many old friends at the new premises at South Elmsall."

● *More People stories on page 63.*

Alexander parent may buy Rolls

WALTER ALEXANDER'S parent company Mayflower may have the upper hand in bids for Rolls Royce parent group Vickers.

Mayflower was last week up against BMW and Mercedes as it made a £1 billion hostile bid for Vickers, and Vickers responded by suggesting it may be prepared to buy back £300 million in shares by selling selling Rolls Royce and medical subsidiaries, investing £200 million in defence, and spending the rest on shares to defuse the takeover.

Vickers shareholders were said to be unmoved, despite the bid coming from a busi-

ness half the Vickers' size and likely to be financed by borrowings. Perversely, part of the Mayflower plan is said to be the sell-off of Vickers' defence businesses and to keep the Rolls Royce, Cosworth and medical businesses.

Analysts are suggesting Vickers shares, at 249p, could be disposed of at the equivalent of 260p if the company is broken up. A year ago, Vickers' shares were trading at 290p. However, the City's reaction to Mayflower's ambitious bid has reduced its share price by 5 1/2 p to 184p. It paid £23.9 million for Walter Alexander in 1995.



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Japanese poised for another launch

Bigger catch to follow the Marlin

By Mike Morgan

LEICESTER CARRIAGE BUILDERS, the Co-op-owned body-builder, has another surprise package up its sleeve. At Coach & Bus 97 it unveiled this country's first PSV from the world's largest commercial vehicle manufacture, Isuzu, in the shape of the competitively-priced 23-seat Marlin. Next it plans to move up the scale into the 7.5 tonne sector dominated by Mercedes-Benz' Vario.

Based on the Japanese-manufacturers light truck range assembled by Leyland Trucks in Lancashire, the new coaches from Leicester Carriage represent a twin threat to established players in the marketplace.

The Marlin is built on 6.2 tonne Isuzu NPR, incorporating the standard truck cab from below the bottom of the windscreen. It is powered by Isuzu 3.9 litre turbo/intercooled engine

producing 120bhp. The first has steel springs but Leicester Carriage general manager, Tony Bull, says Isuzu has an air-suspension option. It is pitched into the sector dominated by the Toyota Optimo and the first has been sold to Coventry City Football Club - which coincidentally has Isuzu Trooper as one of its sponsors - and will be handed over in mid-December.

Further up the range is the 7.5 tonne NQR expected to start production at Leyland in March (CBW 6 November). As sold in the US this model has 4.7 litre 175bhp engine and Mr Bull expects a coach-bodied version will weigh-in at around 4.7 tonnes, offering up to 35 seats in a 2.4 metre wide body. Although reluctant to be drawn on the price, he said that it should be up to £15,000 dearer than the Marlin, giving Leicester Carriage and Isuzu a direct competitor in the midi-coach arena for less than £75,000.



Isuzu 6.2 tonne NPR chassis cowl gets big sister in Spring



A site better: Autobus to share with Unitec

Nouvelle on the move

THE PLANNED relocation of Autobus, the midi-coach division of the Optare Group, is now underway and the short move to Denby Way, Hellaby, will be complete by next Monday.

All operations, including manufacture of the Autobus range of minibus conversions and Nouvelle midi-coach body on Mercedes-Benz Vario chassis/cowl will

function from the recently purchased larger premises which are a few hundred metres closer to the M18 Motorway near Rotherham than the current site.

Autobus will share the premises with Unitec, Optare's spares and service division.

● Its new contact numbers are: phone 0709 535100, fax 01709 535102.

Crystals CTA show launch

AN ALL-NEW MIDI-COACH is promised from Crystals in time for the Community Transport show in Blackpool this week.

Crystals managing director, Chris Springham, told CBW that the £65,000 Millennia is the result of total remodelling of the 33-seat Crystals Enterprise on Mercedes-Benz chassis/cowl. First Millennia to roll off Crystals Doncaster production line are three fitted 25-

seaters with side-mounted tail lift for Barnsley Council (see Deals - page 37). A 33-seat coach is on target for January. It features an all-glassfibre body shell, tinted direct glazing, one-piece coach rear end, front which integrates Mercedes Vario cowl and windscreen, extended quarter lights for improved vision, new rear light system, forced air as standard and executive interior.

Arriva-1

AS EXPECTED the Cowie name change to Arriva was approved at last week's EGM.

From January 1998, the bus operations will come under the single brand of Arriva Passenger Services, bus and coach distribution through Hughes DAF will change to Arriva Bus and Coach.

Despite murmurings of discontent, the groups individual company names will disappear and a new corporate livery be introduced (CBW 6 November).

The Arriva group's bus companies are: Bee Line, Clydeside, Colchester Borough Transport, County Bus (Lea Valley, Thameside,



Nationwide livery for all former Cowie companies

Townlink), Crosville Cymru, Derby City Transport, Grey-Green, Guildford & West Surrey, Horsham Buses, Leaside, Liverline, London & Country, Londonlinks, Maidstone & District, Midland Fox, Midland Red North, North East Bus (Tees & District, Teesside, United), North Western, Northum-

bria, Selby & District, South London, South Yorkshire, Southend Transport, Stevensons, The Shires (Aylesbury & The Vale, Chiltern Rover, Gade Valley, Hitchin & District, Luton & Dunstable, Network Watford, Stevenage Line), Yorkshire Buses (Selby & District, Yorkshire Woollen, West Riding).

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Contract *options*



Service *clinics*



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- Check out new deals in holiday centres
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COACH OPERATORS:

are you receiving your copy of *Coach Tours & Excursions* with *Coach and Bus Week* each month?

If not, telephone Jazz Trusswell on **01733 467048**

Albatross, for this month's best group deals. See Page 7 of the November edition of *Coach Tours & Excursions*

Harry Shaw leads way with 100 vehicles as 50,000 attend Great coach invasion



Welcome: Wayne Harris, of Leger, is greeted by Disneyland Paris staff (from left) Jason Stone, travel industry marketing; Mark Gordon, country manager UK and Ireland, and Michael Linnane, national accounts manager

By William Golden

MORE than 500 coaches beat the blockades in France last week and carried 50,000 passengers to the Disneyland Paris bonfire celebrations.

The two bonfire parties were held on Monday and Thursday, 3 and 6 November, and the first wave of vehicles enjoyed uninterrupted travel on the Sunday night. Travel was also uninterrupted for groups who travelled on the Tuesday and Wednesday for the second spectacular.

Harry Shaw City Cruisers, of Coventry, led the way by having more than 100 vehicles on the road and a spokesman said there had been no problems. Leger Travel, another key

Le Shuttle captures its biggest slice of market

LE SHUTTLE grabbed its largest share of the cross-Channel market so far this year, when it carried more than 7,000 coaches in October.

This gave the Channel Tunnel operator 37.8% of the market, according to the latest traffic figures from Dover Harbour Board. The port itself carried 12,000 vehicles, giving it 62% market share.

There was no coach traffic through Ramsgate last

month because the ro-ro ferry operated by Holyman Sally Ferries was out of action for refurbishment. The conventional craft is now back in service and sailing plans for 1998 are being finalised.

Over the year as a whole, Dover maintains its dominance of the market, with a 74% share, while Le Shuttle has just over 25%, more than one per cent up on the corresponding period in 1996.

Short-sea coach traffic

October 1997

	<u>Coaches</u>	<u>Market Share</u>	<u>+/- Sept 1997</u>
Dover	12,051	62.2%	-13.7%
Ramsgate	0	0%	-0.3%
Le Shuttle	7,321	37.8%	+14.1%

January to October 1997

	<u>Coaches</u>	<u>Market Share</u>	<u>+/- January to Oct 1996</u>
Dover	140,630	73.9%	-1.4%
Ramsgate	961	0.5%	0.0%
Le Shuttle	48,650	25.6%	+1.4%

Norway on song in Brents programme

CRUISES to Norway, cabaret nights and city breaks in Amsterdam and Paris are featured in the new group and corporate travel brochure from Brents.

A Taste of Norway is a four-day sea break that includes a full day in Bergen, and return travel via Color Line from Newcastle. Two and three-night cruise breaks to Scandinavia and Germany are also available.

Two-day city breaks to Amsterdam start from £65 per person for parties of 40 or more, while one night stays in Paris begin at £59.

Champagne and chocolate breaks



to Bruges and Gent start from £60 per person, based in the four-star Holiday Inn Gent Expo.

In the UK, city break destinations include York and Chester, and there are tours to Constable Country, Nor-

folk and the Broads, and the Isle of Wight. Themed break suggestions include Ferry Cross the Mersey, based in Liverpool; Murder Mystery Week-ends; and Your Favourite Tipple, which combines visits to a brewery, vineyard and distillery.

Cabaret nights out include The Talk of the Town and The Cockney Cabaret and Music Hall, in London, from £40 for a party of 20 to 29 people in midweek.

Brents runs a fleet of luxury coaches, ranging from 12 to 53 seats, and can tailor all packages to a group's specific requirement.

firework spectaculars of Disney

Disneyland Paris operator, had a total of 87 coachloads making the crossing.

Peter Illyd Welch, head of commercial affairs, said: "This was one of the largest mass movements of Brits across the Channel. We held our first bonfire event last year and we welcomed 20,000 Brits - much to the surprise of some of our Continental colleagues. It was such a success that we more than doubled the number this year."

On each night, a spectacular floating bonfire was lit in the centre of Lake Disney. This was followed by a sound and light show, and massive firework display, which was visible in the French capital, 20 miles away.

Leger is planning to further increase its carryings to Disneyland Paris through a series of special offers for children.

In its 1998 programme, youngsters from three to 11 will go free in the first three months of the year. Prices for children aged 12 to 16 sharing a room with two adults in an on-site hotel start at £69.

● Harry Shaw also sent 35 coachloads to Paris for the Oasis concert, but this was cancelled because the lorries transporting the group's equipment were caught up in the blockade.

A spokesman for Harry Shaw said the Oasis fans consoled themselves by turning the event into a drinking weekend.

Points of reference

COACH services through the Channel Tunnel are being centralised from next week with the launch of Le Shuttle's Coach Welcome Point.

Dedicated staff will be on duty from 6am to 10pm in the coach parks in the Folkestone and Calais passenger terminals to help speed drivers through check-in. They will be responsible for all coach services. These range from providing up-to-date traffic information to handing out

duty-free shopping passes. Paul Cowgill, Le Shuttle's passenger sales director, said: "Our research has highlighted the need for the centralisation of coach services and the on-site provision of dedicated staff. We are delighted to have been able to respond with the Coach Welcome Point."

"We will be monitoring the new service to establish how well it is meeting the needs of our operators, their drivers and, ultimately, their passengers."

CBW Study Trip USA II: see the best in coaching Stateside



California here we come!

COACHING Stateside is the theme of this year's CBW Study Trip. Yes, that's right, we're off to the country that put the capital into capitalism to see and hear about all the very latest in US coach hardware and operations.

We've teamed up with Paul Tappin to put together a trip that will centre on the United Motorcoach Association's annual Bus Expo - a winning combination of major coach show, business sessions, day tours and social events. And, as next year's Bus Expo is in Sacramento, California, you'll be able to enjoy the double benefits of exchanging business ideas with US operators and getting away from the leaden skies of England in February to some welcome winter sun. An added bonus is that we will also be taking in the magical city of San Francisco. What could be better?

Our five-night tour includes entrance to the show and business sessions, plus admission to the evening opening night reception at the California State Railroad Museum. What is bound to attract the most interest is the business session dealing with the rise and rise of Coach USA. In American terms, Coach USA is a consolidator. In anyone else's, it's a venture capital-backed organisation intent on bringing big business to coaching. In under two years, it has taken over 25 American, family-owned coach companies and now runs more than 2,000 coaches. It has been so successful that other

groups are now trying to emulate it.

What happens in the States invariably comes over here, so our study trip will offer a unique chance to see exactly how it works on home ground. A whole business section will be devoted to this topic but, on top of that, we are also arranging a special forum where UK coach operators can compare and contrast their operations with US operators. That will be a great opportunity to pick up new business ideas.

After Bus Expo, we will leave the luxury of Sacramento's Hilton Hotel for two days in San Francisco. Our hotel here is in the famous Fisherman's Wharf district and, as well as being able to experience the city's hair-raising tram system, you will also be given an inside tour of a major coach operator's business in the Bay area.

It's definitely a trip not to be missed. And, from £985 per person, plus a £199.50 single supplement, demand (as usual) is bound to be high. Airline arrangements mean space is strictly limited, so make sure of your place by booking early.

The 1998 CBW Study Tour USA leaves London Heathrow on Saturday 31 January and returns on Friday 6 February. Full details are available from Paul Tappin at Tappins Coaches, Didcot on 01235 819393; fax 01235 816464. Y'all give him a ring. He'd love to hear from you!



EUROWATCH

WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Amsterdam	11C/52F	Madrid	15C/59F
Athens	17C/63F	Oslo	7F/45F
Berlin	9C/48F	Paris	11C/52F
Brussels	12C/54F	Rome	19C/66F
Dublin	6C/43F	Stockholm	6C/43F
Lisbon	16C/61F	Vienna	13C/55F
Luxembourg	9C/48F	Zurich	6/43F

DIESEL PRICES

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.47	Luxembourg	0.37
Belgium	0.48	Netherlands	0.47
Eire	0.52	Norway	0.63
France	0.45	Portugal	0.40
Germany	0.42	Spain	0.40
Greece	0.38	Sweden	0.54
Italy	0.54	Switzerland	0.53

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	19.99 Sch/£	Italy	2,791 Lire/£
Belgium	58.54 Bfr/£	Netherlands	3.19 Gld/£
Denmark	10.88 K/£	Norway	11.51 Nkr/£
Eire	1.085 Punt/£	Portugal	288 Es/£
France	9.50 F/£	Spain	238 Pta/£
Germany	2.84 DM/£	Sweden	12.26 Skr/£
Greece	447 D/£	Switzerland	2.35 Sfr/£

AA Out and About with AA Roadwatch

South Coast Coaches lose licence

Former bankrupt admits running business for stepson, who could not



LICENCE

COACH operator Adrian Milward's six-vehicle international licence has been suspended indefinitely by South Eastern and Metropolitan traffic commissioner Brigadier Michael Turner.

Mr Milward, who traded as South Coast Coaches & Minibuses, of 189c South Coast Road, Peacehaven, had been called before the commissioner at an Eastbourne disciplinary inquiry but failed to appear.

Brigadier Turner said Mr Milward had first applied for a licence in 1994 after a licence held by his stepfather, Frederick Milward, was terminated after he was declared bankrupt. Frederick Milward had also been convicted of a number of offences involving actual bodily harm, threats to kill and criminal damage.

It was explained at the public inquiry that those problems had arisen because of domestic disputes and that the offences did not involve the public at large but were restricted

to various parties within Frederick Milward's domestic circle. Adrian Milward had said that, in getting his licence, he would continue his stepfather's operation but he would be in charge of running the vehicles while his stepfather would act only as a driver and occasional adviser. Subsequently there were a number of complaints from passengers about either the operation of the vehicles or their mechanical condition though, on a number of occasions, follow-up investigations did not support the original allegation.

Early in 1996 a DoT vehicle examiner, a Mr Cowling, had inspected one coach, imposing a prohibition notice which he endorsed as showing a significant failure of maintenance. The maintenance records at that time showed regular four to five-week inspections though some of the sheets were unsigned and some brake efficiency readings had not been entered. Frederick Milward appeared to be very much in charge of the operations. He inspected a further vehicle in June of

that year but found no defects.

During a further visit in March of this year Mr Cowling found the maintenance arrangements had changed. The records revealed gaps between inspections of up to 26 weeks and the annual test record was poor. In July Mr Cowling reported

tion of the tachograph records. He found there were no proper procedures in place for the checking of tachograph records and recording infringements by drivers. Tachograph charts were not always properly completed and revealed several offences committed by drivers. He

'However, if Adrian Milward could not be contacted, the licence might have to be revoked and he might well find himself banned from holding a licence in the future'

that he feared Frederick Miller was actually running the operation. Two warning letters had been issued in relation to maintenance and Mr Cowling had said Mr Milward was not having preventative maintenance inspections.

At about the same time a traffic examiner carried out an investiga-

said the operation now appeared to be run entirely by Frederick Milward.

For Frederick Milward, who was not present, Colin Ward said he admitted that, for some considerable time, he had been the *de facto* manager of this bus operation. Frederick Milward had not seen his stepson for



Commissioner was to consider action against Wealden's O-licence

Wealden surrenders under pressure



LICENCE

WEALDEN PSV LTD has surrendered its O-licence. The surrender came shortly before the company, which traded as Wealden Beeline, of The Bus Garage, 64 Wheatsheaf Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent, was due to appear at an Eastbourne disciplinary inquiry before South East-

ern and Metropolitan traffic commissioner Brigadier Michael Turner.

The commissioner had given notice he was considering revoking, suspending or curtailing the company's licence, disqualifying the company and its directors from holding a licence, banning it from operating any local registered services and ordering it to repay fuel duty rebate.

Ace Coaches held to account



MAINTENANCE

A PARENT had to put water in an Ace Coaches school service coach - and Hereford & Worcester County Council complained about the incident, a Birmingham disciplinary inquiry was told. Angela Powell, trading as Ace Coaches, of 60 Seaton Avenue, Tupsley, Hereford, had been called before West Midlands traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh because of concern over the maintenance of her vehicles. The commissioner reduced the licence authorisation from eight to six vehicles.

For Mrs Powell, Norman Carless said transport manager Kenneth Wheadon, who had acquired his CPC through examination, had been managing the business for three years. It was a case where there had been a hiccup in the conduct of the business, the maintenance investigation report in June having referred to a previous satisfactory assessment in January.

Mr Pugh said the June report had been classed as unsatisfactory but Mr Carless said a certain vehicle was said to have deficient brakes. He was told the efficiency had been

17% when the minimum was, in fact, 16%, though he was not suggesting that 1% above the minimum was satisfactory and that had clearly been the view of the vehicle examiner.

Seven vehicles were in current use. One problem was that drivers had not been doing what they should over daily reports. One vehicle stopped for excessive smoke emission had no reported problem over the previous two days. As a result of those problems, two drivers had been dismissed, said Mr Carless.

Mr Wheadon said they were taking steps to make double sure matters were put right. The firm's two fitters were being sent on a VI course at Bristol, they had also obtained the video which showed drivers how to carry out daily checks on the vehicles, and they had purchased the new inspection manual.

One prohibition notice had been a matter of the vehicle's construction, said Mr Wheadon. Certain things that should have been operated from the door were operated from the driver's dashboard. That vehicle had previously gone through the MoT test on nine or 10 occasions without problem. It had since been modified. They currently had four single deckers and four minibuses, and one of

indefinitely

be contacted for public inquiry

some considerable time, and that was clearly the result of some family problem. Frederick Milward's intention was now to apply for a licence in his own name to continue the current operation.

In his view Adrian Milward was not receiving any correspondence from the Traffic Area Office, said Mr Ward, and it was being intercepted either by Frederick Milward or his former wife.

It was always extremely difficult to reach a decision when the operator was not present, said Brigadier Turner. On the other hand he had to take account of the fact the reports from the vehicle and traffic examiners showed there were considerable difficulties with maintenance and tachograph record keeping, both of which matters were safety related.

He accepted Adrian Milward might not be receiving the correspondence, said the commissioner, but it was his legal responsibility to ensure he could be contacted. If he was aware of the situation he should have at least telephoned the Traffic

Area so the correspondence could be sent to an alternative address.

It was clear Adrian Milward was actually now taking no responsibility at all for the management of the vehicles, something he was required to do as the licence holder.

Further efforts would be made to contact Adrian Milward and bring him to public inquiry. However, if he could not be contacted, the licence might have to be revoked and he might well find himself banned from holding a licence in the future.

As far as Frederick Milward was concerned, it would be a matter for him to decide whether or not he wished to apply for a separate licence, said Brigadier Turner. However, on his own admission Frederick Milward had been responsible for running the business for the period covered by the reports of the vehicle and traffic examiners and his *de facto* conduct of the business would be a matter that would have to be taken into account when assessing good repute in relation to a new application in his own name.



Brigadier Turner: suspended licence of absent Adrian Milward

after complaint from parent causes concern

the latter was waiting for wheelchair equipment to be fitted. He had the full backing of Mrs Powell in the steps he had taken to put the situation right.

Mr Pugh said Mr Wheadon had quite clearly let Mrs Powell down and he wondered what confidence he could have in him for the future but Mr Wheadon said he was really

put in the radiator.

Denying that water had to be put in the radiator, Mr Wheadon said it was the header tank, which had split. It was one of the problems with old buses. The service that bus ran on was up and down dale and it put a lot of pressure on it. Water had certainly not been leaking when the vehicle went out, and it had been the

checked the flow chart and the records but Mr Pugh pointed out her vehicles had not been kept in a fit and safe condition. Mrs Powell said she had been relying upon her transport manager. She had suspended Mr Wheadon for a fortnight without pay and with written warning.

Mr Pugh said the safe carriage of children was absolutely paramount. Parents trusted coach operators. This business of water being put into a vehicle by a parent was quite disgraceful. A crack like that did not occur overnight and he thought Mrs Powell needed to have her vehicles inspected more regularly.

Mrs Powell said she was prepared to have the vehicles inspected every 14 days. Asked what the parents would have thought if they had been present during the proceedings, she said: "They would be very disappointed." Reducing the authorisation, Mr Pugh said that was to give Mrs Powell an opportunity of showing she could cope with that reduced number. He would ask the VI to carry out a further fleet inspection within six months. If that was satisfactory, Mrs Powell could apply to increase her fleet but any such application would be heard at public inquiry.

Mr Pugh said the safe carriage of children was absolutely paramount. Parents trusted coach operators. This business of water being put into a vehicle by a parent was quite disgraceful

on the employees' backs now.

Mr Pugh said he was always concerned when he received a complaint from a county council.

Mr Wheadon replied that the vehicle examiner had been satisfied the complaint had not really been justified but Mr Pugh said the parents at the school concerned could not be very happy that one of their number had to bring water out to

parent's idea to put water in after the driver had wanted to ring for a replacement vehicle.

He did not think much of that as an excuse, said Mr Pugh. The vehicle should never have gone out in that condition. It was pretty clear Mrs Powell had not been doing what she had said she would in her statements of intention. Mrs Powell said she went down every day and

Warning for taxi man



MAINTENANCE

A TAXI operator, whose minibus picked up a prohibition indicating a significant maintenance failure, has been warned that a further appearance at public inquiry will mean the revocation of his PSV O-licence.

Brian Pritchard, trading as Valley Cars, of 28 Eirw Road, Britannia, Porth, Mid Glamorgan, appeared before South Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh at a Cardiff disciplinary inquiry.

Mr Pritchard said he could not say what had gone wrong other than his fitter had let him down. He was a very good diesel fitter and he'd had severe words with him.

He serviced his three taxis himself, said Mr Pritchard, but relied upon the fitter to inspect the minibus every six weeks.

Giving Mr Pritchard a very serious warning, Mr Pugh said he wanted the minibus to go through a fresh MoT test within a fortnight and a new contract with the fitter for inspections every four weeks.

No licence for sex offender



PCV LICENCE

A LINCOLNSHIRE bus driver, who had been convicted of sex offences with the under-age daughter of a coach operator, has had his licence to drive buses revoked and been banned from holding such a licence for five years.

Alan Wheatley, of 5 Nookings Drive, Hibaldstow, Brigg, appeared at a Leeds disciplinary inquiry before North Eastern traffic commissioner Keith Waterworth. The commissioner was considering what action to take against Wheatley's PSV driving licence in the light of the convictions.

In January, Mr Wheatley was given a 16-month prison sentence after admitting at Grimsby Crown Court two offences of having sex with a girl under 16. Wheatley's solicitor, Malcolm Whiting, told the commissioner he had received a substantial jolt, having languished in prison for eight

'I would be failing in my duty if I did not deal with you harshly' said commissioner Keith Waterworth

months. He was on licence until next May and he'd had to register with the police under the Sexual Offenders Act.

Mr Whiting said there had been no element of coercion in the offences and there was no evidence to indicate Mr Wheatley was a threat to children in general: "I will be the judge of that," said the commissioner.

Mr Wilby, the proprietor of a coach firm who was prepared to give Wheatley a job, was present at the hearing, said Mr Whiting. Mr Wilby had 18 school runs. However, he could offer Wheatley work that would not bring him into contact with children.

The commissioner pointed out he had no power to impose such a condition on the licence.

"My job is to protect the public and schoolchildren from people like you," the commissioner told Mr Wheatley. "I would be failing in my duty if I did not deal with you harshly."

Revoking Mr Wheatley's licence, and disqualifying him, Mr Waterworth said: Mr Wheatley had the right of appeal against his decision. Mr Whiting said they would be exercising that right: "Good," replied the commissioner.

Compensation for sacked Crosville Cymru drivers

Concern over present employment law - Lord Nolan

By Michael Jewell



TRIBUNAL

CROSVILLE CYMRU has been ordered by the House of Lords to pay full compensation for unfair dismissal to 73 drivers who were not re-engaged after being sacked for taking industrial action.

Giving judgment, Lord Nolan said he felt little satisfaction about the justice of the result as it was not a case of deliberate victimisation by the employer, yet it was being required to pay just as much compensation as if it had been. It was an area of the law which would benefit from the attention of the Law Commission.

The House dismissed an appeal by Crosville Cymru, of Imperial Buildings, Glan-y-Mar Road, Llandudno Junction, Gwynedd, against a decision of the Court of Appeal allowing appeals by 73 of the company's former employees against a decision of the Employment Appeals Tribunal, which had reversed the decision of an industrial tribunal not to make any deduction for contributory fault.

The tribunal had added that, had it felt it had been entitled to reduce the compensation on that ground, it would have done so by 50%.

Crosville had dismissed 119 bus drivers who had taken part in a walk-out in support of union branch officers disciplined during a ban on overtime and rest-day working in support of a pay claim.

Twenty-two of those dismissed



Lord Nolan 'had little satisfaction about the justice of the result'

were subsequently re-employed. The industrial tribunal had ruled that the company's failure to re-engage all the drivers was unfair.

The company had failed to offer re-engagement to all of them because it had thought that advertising through the media and the job centre was sufficient to constitute an offer complying with the employment legislation.

The House ruled that, in circumstances where all the employees taking part in collective industrial action were equally responsible, and for which they all had been dismissed, the compensation payable for unfair dismissal on the selective re-engagement of some employees to those who were not re-engaged could not be reduced to take account of contributory fault.

It was impossible to judge the blameworthiness or otherwise of a particular employee's conduct with-

out reference to the conduct of the other employees concerned and to that of the employer. However, individual blameworthy conduct additional to or separate from the mere act of participation in industrial action could in principle amount to contributory fault.

Although the complainants' claims for compensation only came into existence because of the selective re-engagement carried out by Crosville Cymru, that factor had to be ignored in determining whether the compensation should be reduced. However, in the 1994 case of *TNT Express (UK) Ltd v Downes*, it was held that, where an employee had been dismissed while engaged in industrial action, the merits of the case could only be considered if it could be shown that the employee had been subjected to discriminatory treatment in the matter of dismissal or re-engagement.

COMS to appeal against 'brake failure'



MAINTENANCE

CITY OF OXFORD MOTOR SERVICES is to appeal to Isleworth Crown Court after being convicted of using a vehicle with defective brakes and fined £3,000 by the Ealing Magistrates.

The company, of 395 Cowley Road, Oxford, had denied using a coach with a braking system part of which was not maintained in good and efficient working order following an accident.

Prosecuting, Patrick Powell said that the charge arose out of a collision on the westbound carriageway of the A40, when a DAF coach, belonging to the company and operating on its London to Oxford City Link service, collided with a Volvo car in the outside lane.

A police constable who tested the vehicle afterwards

said he had experienced complete brake failure which he could only attribute to a defect such as a broken brake actuator.

Peter Grimes, City of Oxford's chief engineer, said that, when tested on a rolling road brake tester, the overall braking efficiency of the coach was in excess of the test standard, and consultant engineer Stanley Thomas said that it was impossible for a vehicle with that braking system to suffer the total loss of braking effort described. It was even less credible that it should do so and then recover to hold on the handbrake and then achieve the efficiency described by Mr Grimes.

In fining COMS £3,000 and £200 prosecution costs, magistrates said that they took account of the size of City of Oxford.

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1993 PLAXTON 425 INTEGRAL powered by
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53 reclining seats, finished white
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55 seats, power door, full soft trim,
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M.O.T. MARCH 1998

**1990 DAF SB 2300 JONCKHEERE
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51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec.,
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1987 SETRA 215HR
49 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec.,
including SUTRAK AIR CONDITIONING,
finished silver.
M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1989 LEYLAND TIGER 260 12 DUPLÉ 320
53 reclining seats, finished cream/orange
M.O.T. OCTOBER 1997

1981 DAF PLAXTON SUPREME
53 seats, power door, brown interior,
finished brown/cream.
M.O.T. JULY 1998

**1987 DAF MB 230 DKFL 12M PLAXTON
PARAMOUNT 3500**
51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec.,
finished white/orange stripe.
M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1997

1989 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE
57 seats, finished all white.
M.O.T. MARCH 1998

**1982 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLÉ
GOLDLINER IV**
53 seats, recent retrim, courier seat,
finished cream/duo brown.
M.O.T. JULY 1998

1989 SCANIA K93 DUPLÉ 320
51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec.,
finished silver/blue.
M.O.T. MAY 1998

**1987 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON
PARAMOUNT 3200**
53 reclining seats, finished white with
green/blue flash on sides.
M.O.T. DECEMBER 1997

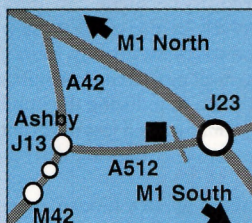
1989 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE
53 seats, finished all white.
M.O.T. MARCH 1998

MINIS

**1987 FREIGHT ROVER SHERPA CARLYLE
MK1 BODY**

20 Bus type seats + 5 standeeze, full
soft trim, radio, power door, finished
all white.
M.O.T. JUNE 1998

1987 MERCEDES 307D
12 seater, grey/red/orange striped
moquette, overhead luggage racks,
radio/P.A. tape, finished white with
lower blue band
M.O.T. JANUARY 1998



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Cut some of the fuel rebate red tape

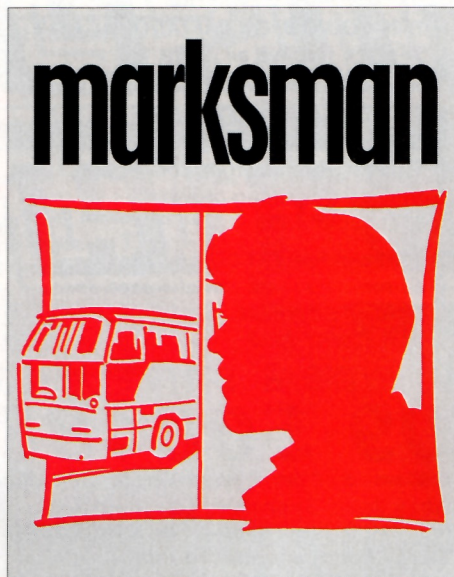
PRESS reports a week or two ago outlined how Civil Servants were to be given corporate credit cards with which to make small purchases for 'business' purposes. This was as a result of the Audit Commission discovering that the cost of the paperwork necessary to seek and grant approval for a transaction, to actually authorise and order the product and to then account for it and to effect payment could cost many times more than the product or service procured.

In itself this is hardly an earth-shattering discovery. Most small businesses have, as an economic necessity, learned to minimise the costs of effecting any transaction, while maintaining sufficient control to limit fraud or abuse by employees combined with sufficient documentation for management and corporate accounting.

Where I think this new approach by Government might bring a dividend to our industry is if the same thought process is applied to fuel duty rebate. While I would not suggest that the cost of administering the fuel duty rebate scheme is greater than the rebate itself, the cost to the Government of collecting the duty on the one hand and paying part of it back, subject to verifying both the provisional (estimated) and final (actual) claim, must be quite considerable.

Remember, the audit needs to check that all services claimed for are, in fact, registered and run according to registered particulars; that the nature of the actual service is such that it is eligible; that the miles per gallon on which the claim is based is correct, etc. etc. The flip side is the cost of record keeping, monitoring and claiming by the industry. In my estimation the actual value of fuel duty rebate is reduced by at least 10% as a result of the costs involved in claiming it.

Although this cost is not directly borne by Government, it does not seem unreasonable for the effi-



*The Audit Commission
must change this
cumbersome system*

cacy and cost of the system as a whole to be offset against the benefits - for a saving in costs to operators translates directly into lower fares or a greater ability to operate routes commercially. The former is much in keeping with contemporary thought about reducing car dependency, and the latter will reduce the cost of local authority support (which in principle is part of the Government money-goround).

Although I lack the statistics to make the case, I

have little doubt that the net cost, after eliminating swathes of unnecessary red tape on both sides, of allowing rebated (red) diesel to be used in any PSV, would not be significantly higher than the present fuel duty rebate on only bus services.

The benefits of extending fuel duty rebate would be enormous — not just to operators but to local authorities (in lower contract prices) and to pollution and congestion control (by reducing coach charter and separate fare prices). Indeed, I think the Government should be urged to re-assess the role of the coach in reducing car dependency.

My experience, which I am sure mirrors that of operators the length and breadth of the land, is that it is very hard, indeed, to persuade car users to travel by bus, yet relatively easy to entice those with access to cars to go on coach excursions, tours and private hires. That in itself must make a significant and valuable contribution to reducing the number of cars travelling for leisure-related journeys (not to mention reducing the incidence of drink-drive accidents and fatalities).

I suggest there is also a greater, hidden, benefit: getting car drivers on to coaches is a first step to making them see the benefits of using other public transport options. I am not clever enough to know how to work out the cost benefits of such things, but I am sure that it is not beyond the wit of the Audit Commission to quantify this and bring it into account in any review of fuel duty rebating.

On top of all that, having a simple rebate on all fuel purchased for use by PSVs in place of the present cumbersome system opens the door to apply a differential level of effective rebate which could discriminate in favour of low emission 'City' diesel.

It is to be hoped that some positive proposals along these lines might be contained in the transport White Paper which is expected in the Spring of 1998.

Spend time and change for the better

FORGIVE me if I have mentioned this maxim of Einstein before: "You cannot solve problems with the same thinking that caused them in the first place." This was brought back to my mind when I recently read a sentence with a very similar message: "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you always got." To which I would only add: "At best, if you are lucky."

Many operators still believe that a policy of no change will return them to the sunny days of a few years ago. The cold, hard, reality is that doing what you always did is unlikely to give you what you used to get and it will most certainly not make things improve for, if problems there be (and we all have them) they are caused by what we have done, not by what we could do.

The other day an operator said to me: "I wish someone would give me all the things I need to know in a simple, brief, note. I have so many piles of stuff on my desk to read that I will never get

through them." We all know the feeling but somewhere in that pile of paper lies the future. Hidden away is the very idea that could change the course of the business and the rewards of those involved. Only by digging and delving into complex matters (for reducing intricate ideas, legislation, consultation or marketing opportunities into simple terms is not an option) can we get out of the rut of doing what we have always done and thereby compounding the problems thus generated. I have never been taught speed-reading, but I have developed my own techniques of reading quite fast. In many cases reading just the first couple of paragraphs is sufficient to decide whether the news column, mail-shot, or multi-page article, is going to add to knowledge or have any useful application. At all events, I do not read line by line from left to right, but simply scan down the middle of the page. It is incredibly easy to do and does enable the reader to get a sufficient grasp of what is being said to

decide whether it merits deeper concentration.

It may not be a good way to get the cadences of the King James Bible, the rhythm of Shakespeare or the pictorial descriptions of Dickens, but it is an excellent way of cutting through the verbiage of professional journals, junk-mail and technical papers.

I have explained all of this - and recommend readers to try it for themselves - because there is otherwise the risk that the future will remain buried for so long in the pile of papers to be read when time permits that it has either been overtaken by events - or simply chucked out when the pile gets too big for comfort.

The future is change, not standing still; but change for the right reasons, not on whim or impulse. The future may well be staring you in the face as you read this, yet it may take a little finding. But, most importantly of all, it is worth spending the time and making the effort to discover the future, for the past will be no succour and may even be a millstone.

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DIARY



Free sub for your help

THE venerable archive files of *Coach and Bus Week* and its predecessor *Coachmart* have become a casualty of the years and countless office moves.

The result is a number of significant gaps in our collection, hence this appeal for any spare copies readers may have, collecting dust in a corner of the office.

The list of missing copies is too long to carry here, but around 100 issues, dated between Number 1, 15 November 1978, through to 661, dated 17 October 1991, are required.

If you have any magazines in that age range, drop us a line and we'll fax or e-mail you a full list of those which are missing.

We're offering a free subscription and a mystery gift (we haven't thought of one yet) as prizes in a draw; the more back issues you supply, the more 'tickets' you get. The usual address applies.

BYGONE DAYS

NJM is as tough as old leather

"Does anyone know of another coach like this one that is still in service?" This question comes from Len Cooper, managing director of Leathers Coaches of Wiltshire, who is certainly keen to hear from another current operator of the once ubiquitous Bedford SB.

This Plaxton Panorama IV-bodied 'Grant-spec' 41-seater was first registered in March 1973 when it cost £7,000. It was bought by Maiden Bradley-based Leathers in 1978 and has been used virtually every day since.

Not that this remarkable survivor is an SB despite being mechanically identical to Bedford chassis built before and after 1973. When Bedford went over to the PJK, the faithful SB became the NJM.

The coach stormed through its annual test this week and is back at work six days a week on regular schools contracts and Leathers network of local market day bus services. The company ran its first school services with a model T Ford in 1923.

Plaxton built the

BRIAN SOUTER'S knock-out performance at the LT annual lecture last week was a characteristic blend of uncompromising statements with the Stagecoach chairman shooting from the hip. However, it wouldn't have been complete without his special brand of Scottish humour.

Noting Nicholas Ridley's contribution with deregulation and privatisation, he said: "An interesting story, I gather, I don't know if it's right, but it's a good story. But apparently Nick Ridley's grandfather was Viscount... I don't know... Viscount what's his face of somewhere, and he apparently had been the man who brought in the 1930 Act which regulated the bus industry."

"Ridley was determined that he would be the man who would reverse the action of his grandfather and he said that, for too many years, passengers had been chasing buses and this new piece of legislation would mean that from then on buses would chase passengers!"

London, of course, is a special case and Mr Souter had been instructed by his London managers not to upset members of the London Transport Board... he said.

The life of Brian



One eye on the price: Souter champions low fares

Nevertheless he couldn't resist an observation that prices have gone up very steeply in London.

He said: "This was particularly brought home to me when I took Betty and our three children on a bus to go up Tottenham Court Road. Just a short space, maybe about... I don't know... less than a mile anyway."

"I said to the conductor: 'Two and three halves' and the conductor said: 'That'll

be £2.90.' And I thought: 'I did nay think I needed a bank loan to go three stops, ye know.'"

"Anyhow, he was a wonderful person with a social conscience. I'm not going to tell you what company he worked for but he said: 'I can't take this money off you, Sir, I'm only going to charge you for the two adults.'"

"Thank goodness somebody hasn't read the Sunday Times Richest 500."

COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING...

10 YEARS AGO

● **OPTARE**, the Leeds-based firm of coach builders, has won an order worth £2.5 million from Leyland Bus. The order, to build 20 Leyland Olympian 9.6 metre double-deckers in semi-coach specification is for three Leyland customers. Half the buses are designed for Maidstone and the other half is to be shared between the ex NBC Cambus and Reading. The workforce has been increased by 20 to 200.

● **EAST YORKSHIRE MOTOR SERVICES** has made two major new appointments. Eric Boyes, currently manager of Portsmouth City Transport has been appointed general manager of Scarborough and District and Malcolm Robson becomes EYMS operations manager in Hull.

15 YEARS AGO

● **NOVEMBER**, normally a cheerless month, is brightened by the launch of a new fully integral coach from Leyland Bus. The new coach is called the Leyland Royal Tiger Doyen and is produced at the Charles Roe factory in Leeds, using mostly mechanical components from the Tiger 245 chassis. Journalists who have had previews and in some cases have driven the coach are describing it as the answer to the Continental invasion of high specification bodied and integral vehicles operating in the UK. However, it has taken two years to develop and may be too late.

● **DERBYSHIRE** independents, JH Wooliscroft & Son Ltd of Darley Dale, have been held to have unfairly dismissed Mr John Wooliscroft the director in charge of the operations of the company's subsidiary, Henry Hulley & Sons Ltd of Baslow, by a Nottingham Industrial Tribunal.



Staying power: NJM going strong at almost 25 years old

Panorama bodywork with one-person bus operation in mind and it has been used exclusively on this type of work. Consequently it is not fitted with a tachometer.

Leathers runs an all-Bedford fleet, including an OB, and Mr Cooper is at a loss to know what he is going to buy to replace them. He

says the NJM has been very economical - 15/16 mpg from the 330 Bedford diesel - and 100% reliable.

And its cellulose paintwork has lasted almost 20 years.

What more could ask from a £7,000 investment approaching its 25th anniversary.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, *Coach and Bus Week*, EMAP Automotive Ltd, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS
fax: 01733 467154 e-mail: FrankF@automotive.emap.co.uk

Why not start a campaign?

You're quite right (*CBW*, 23 October) it is time to get tough on the many coach and tour operators and organisers of various different hues who are still flouting the EC Directive of Package Holidays. But the problem is not which of the three options is being used - and for most coach operators 'bonding' is not the option - but how to ensure that 'insurance' or 'a trust' is in place and how the regulations can be policed.

You are, however, wrong to say the coach industry has yet to get involved in the talking. On 11 November 1996 I had my first meeting with Nigel Griffiths MP - then a shadow minister and now Parliamentary under-secretary of state for competition and consumer affairs. As an organisation promoting the use of coaches to the consumer, the Coach Tourism Council believes protecting the consumer from unscrupulous operators is paramount. Since that initial meeting I have had talks and contributions from several bodies, not least the Confederation of Passenger Transport. It is quite clear that, during the life of this Government, there is a probability that a new licensing body will be set up and the involvement of the coach industry is vital.

From 1 January 1998 the Coach Tourism Council proposes to ask all operator members what form of consumer protection they are using. I hope other organisations will do the same with their members.

Coach and Bus Week should now start a campaign on behalf of all the responsible coach operators to ensure the industry's voice is heard. On behalf of the Coach Tourism Council and in my individual capacity I will be happy to contribute or assist.

DAVID FENTON
Chief Executive
Coach Tourism Council
London N5

Why adopt this 'girlie' image?

I was horrified to read in *CBW* of the proposed renaming of all Cowie

Letter of the Week

Lowfloors not coming up to the mark

With reference to your comments (*CBW*, 16 October) "that the industry is meeting the needs of the market place" as far as lowfloor vehicles are concerned there is a long way to go. Nottinghamshire County Council Public Transport Group visited Coach and Bus 97 at the NEC to look at accessible transport in respect of wheelchair users.

One of our staff who uses a standard-size electric wheelchair experienced difficulty in obtaining access to several manufacturers' buses (eg) Wright, Plaxton etc that used the full lowfloor or partial DPTAC spec.

This is the first time he had tried to use his wheelchair on any bus. As a wheelchair user he found it was extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to manoeuvre the wheelchair into the travelling position provided. Even if the vehicle is to full DPTAC spec. The requirements to have a pole secured top and bottom, stopping the wheelchair moving across the bus floor in a turn, actually hinders access to the wheelchair position. You should bear in mind the bus is empty. Here are some other comments he made.

"I had a demo ride on Travel West Midlands' gas bus. I managed to board from the car park. NO raised kerb. The bus knelt and the driver got a ramp out. I thought this was going to be the difficult part but no, manoeuvring into the wheelchair space proved more so. I managed, though. The West Midlands DAF Optare double decker was by far the best

for access.

"If, however, the buses had a full complement of passengers with shopping, it would be impossible to get in to position quickly enough before the bus starts moving. Although DPTAC is a step in the right direction, I feel it is impractical for the user. When I left the show it was quicker to load my wheelchair in to the car than get positioned on a bus.

"Getting on the bus, having to stop to get money or cards out (lots of disabled people have difficulty in manipulating small objects such as money), putting the money and/or ticket away while holding shopping etc, and then moving into position take time. I personally do not like travelling facing backwards.

"As it is at the moment I would not use buses for the above reasons. The main problem as I see it is the handrail/pole that has to be removed and replaced with something else. Some operators are looking at the folding arm. The DoT is suggesting putting a crank in the bottom half of the pole. I feel this may help in some cases. However one of the vehicles we boarded had a cranked pole, but it was still very difficult to get in position."

HOWARD JACKSON

Director of planning and economic development
Nottinghamshire County Council
West Bridgford
Nottingham

companies to "Arriva" and the adoption of a standard livery. As a lifelong regular bus user (of 37 years), as well as being involved in local government in a public transport capacity, it is the bus-operating companies which particularly interest me.

I am incensed at the remarks regarding buses appealing to a feminine clientele. This view of buses as being for transporting housewives and little old ladies is a view the industry is trying hard to shrug off. We are talking the 1990s here, and if the macho men are to be tempted out of their cars this is not the sort of image that is going to do it.

When Stagecoach livery spread around the country like a cancer we lost many superb public transport liveries, some recent, some of long-standing (Southdown and KHCT to name but two). Now it looks like we are going to see another wave of wanton destruction of local identities and colour schemes. (It was acknowledged that red buses were a part of the heritage of London and they should stay that way - why were the same safeguards not imposed in other towns and cities, where to their citizens the colour of

their buses was equally important?)

Already the bus drivers round here are asking what colour handbags they are going to be issued with.

IAN WILSON
Middlesbrough
Teesside

Let's not act like sheep

Instead of driving to the NEC from Kent Roger Davies could have joined me on the train to and from the show (*CBW*, 23 October). It took just over three hours each way from home with lots of time for a drink and a snack en route. No stress.

I didn't look at the coaches; that's not really our market. However, I spent a lot of time looking at the SLF buses. We have one SLF bus, the first in our area. The local authority has given us a lot of support, including improvement of pavement access to the bus. Not all local authorities would do this. However, the bus is used mainly by traditional bus pas-

sengers, including mums with buggies, not wheelchair users.

Roger is right, the industry is simply trying to follow a trend, without thinking of the implications.

I would rather buy a two to three year old high-capacity, modern, but conventional bus which can be used on any of our routes.

DON BENN
Managing director
Fuggles of Benenden
Benenden
Kent

Letter of the Week wins a
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C/1411/07

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C/1411/03

49 Recliners, Crew Seat, Centre Sunken Toilet, Centre Continental Door, Air Conditioning

1994 VOLVO B10M - GL
Plaxton Premiere 320

C/1411/04

57 Fixed Seats, Power Entrance Door, Soft Trim, R & P.A.

J73 VTG 1992 SETRA S215HD

C/1411/01

49 Recliners, Crew Seat, Centre Sunken Toilet, Centre Continental Door, Plug Entrance Door, Video & Monitor, MAN 14.5 Litre

1992 DAF SB3000
Caetano Algarve

C/1411/08

49/53 Recliners, Crew Seat, Centre Demountable Toilet, Centre Continental Door, Water Boiler, Plug Entrance Door, R & P.A.

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C/1411/06

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C/1411/02

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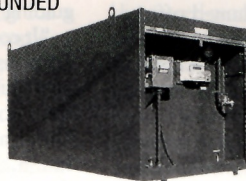
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As the coach and bus industry's driver shortage spiralled out of control, CBW campaigned for sensible rules on the road to a PCV licence. Mike Morgan brings you our exclusive report on the DSA's response to the crisis

'We did consult'

THE DRIVING STANDARDS AGENCY strongly defended its actions over the controversial introduction of the PCV theory test on 1 January 1997. In an exclusive interview with *CBW* the DSA claims it did consult with the coach and bus industry and that the questions, answers and marking system used on the theory paper were researched in depth.

In the middle of the Summer *CBW* put the DSA in the firing line as the coach and bus industry faced a genuine crisis of driver shortage aggravated by time delays caused by the new theory test.

PSV operators need a steady drip feed of new drivers. When this tap is turned off the system stops - no drivers, no coaches, no buses. Just four short months ago the industry was faced with the prospect of a prolonged drought. There was a crisis caused by economic and social factors outside the control of individual operators. However, there was also an unhappy coincidence with new rules which threatened to strangle the PCV training sector at the same time the industry as a whole was suffering a severe haemorrhage.

The new theory test for would-be PCV drivers was held to be responsible. It had been launched earlier this year to run side-by-side with the practical test with very little controversy other than some disagreement over the relevance of a number of the vocational questions. But, come 1 July the rule that the theory test has to come before the practical became the final straw on the back of the training camel. Suddenly the time scale from recruitment to qualification was stretched from days to weeks. Those who wanted to drive a bus or coach found they couldn't afford the lost income and turned to other careers.

Inevitably the Driving Standards Agency was held responsible. The DSA set the rules and *CBW* received numerous calls from training schools and small operators who couldn't believe that the special needs of the PSV industry had been ignored.

Their grievance was simply that, before 1 July

there was no problem so why couldn't there be a U-turn to the previous flexibility over which part of the test was taken first? It was taking up to 14 days to book a theory test and 10 days to get a result. What about a fast-track arrangement taking advantage of available computer technology? Companies with delegated examiners had an apparent advantage.

By the end of July it was clear that we had uncovered the tip of an iceberg. In some areas a driver shortage crisis loomed with London bus companies in particular facing a constant turnover of between 30 and 50%. *CBW* blamed officialdom for planting a time bomb in the very foundations of the industry ready for imminent detonation with potentially disastrous results. A week later this view was endorsed by operators faced with ridiculous and unnecessary delays in applying for, and taking, theory and driving tests. The effect on operators and training schools was catastrophic. We believed that the answer was in the hands of the DSA and, with frustration within the industry mounting as the weeks turned into months there was a last gasp attempt to halt the spiral of despair. Our news pages in the 21 August issue of *CBW* painted a picture of an industry which was paying the penalty for not being understood.

That was August. Now the good news. *CBW*'s campaign has opened up an important line of communication. In a positive move to bring itself closer to the coach and bus industry DSA agreed to talk.

Clearly affronted by inferences that the DSA was being held responsible for the coach and bus industry's ills, the agency's top-level managers had been put on the defensive.

Success in achieving the coveted Investors in People award is proudly displayed around the DSA's training centre at the historic Cardington airbase near Bedford. Where airships were once launched the DSA now trains its driving examin-



Driving forward: The DSA's theory test may

ers, using the motto 'Safe Driving for Life' as its guiding principle.

"It comes down to driver standards," said publications manager and supervising driving examiner, Philip Welsh as he launched into a defence of the theory test. Although driven by the European Union as part of its ongoing pursuit of harmonisation, the theory test is not the universal villain in this particular dispute. But why should it take 14 days to book and 10 days to get a result?

"Trainers can make block booking where they buy and pay for slots of theory tests without needing to identify candidates more than three days in advance," said training manager, Bob Millard, "it's exactly the same as the arrangement for the practical tests but some trainers are not aware of this." Because there is no register of PCV driver trainers, the DSA finds it difficult to communicate directly with the training industry.

Trainer booking may overcome the initial delay yet there's still the wait for a result. "Not if candidates pay £25 instead of £15 for the theory test," said Mr Millard. As from 29 September, 22 of the 150 contracted-out theory test centres offer the one hour 'fast-track'. Drive Safe, part of the Capita Group, deliver the service on behalf of the DSA and, as yet, the premium service has limited availability - but, according to Mr Millard, should be within reach of the majority of PCV industry candidates.

The consequence of these changes is that with



have jack-knifed, but this trailer-equipped test bus proved remarkably responsive, even in reverse

adequate planning and using the three day confirmation of block-booked tests, it is possible for a new recruit to start training on, for example, a Monday, take the theory test on Tuesday, get the result the same day, and take the practical driving test on Friday, becoming ready for work within five days of starting.

Fast track costs more and the trial is restricted to 22 centres to establish the viability of the system.

Why does it cost more? Because the results have to be entered manually and verified with the DVLA's records in Swansea.

Why did it take from 1 July to 29 September to introduce the change? "Because the General Election effectively blanked out six weeks of the consultation period," said Mr Welsh.

But surely the major difficulty is that the theory test has to be taken before practical training can

start. "No. This is a misconception which is also held by the general public. As long as candidates hold a provisional licence they can get behind the wheel and start on-the-road training before they take the theory test," said Mr Millard's deputy, John Bridge. "This is so that theory and practical can be taken side by side. However, candidates must pass the theory first."

Earlier the DSA had announced that it had backed down on proposals for a 10-day penalty period between test failure and a retest (it is now three days), so, together with the clarifications given by its top management, this concession is point four of a plan of action in response to the criticism voiced through the pages of *CBW*.

However, there is recognition that two-way communication between the PSV industry and the DSA needs to be opened-up. The Confederation of Passenger Transport is already consulted as a matter of policy but there remains the absence of a register of PCV trainers, preventing direct contact with those with responsibility for providing the industry with that much-needed drip feed of new drivers.

However, *CBW*'s campaign has broken down some of the barriers and there's a promise of direct access in the future. Therefore, operators, trainers, and drivers who still feel the DSA is not serving them well should contact this magazine as a matter of urgency. We have a mandate to let the DSA know what you think.

Driving tests with a trailer

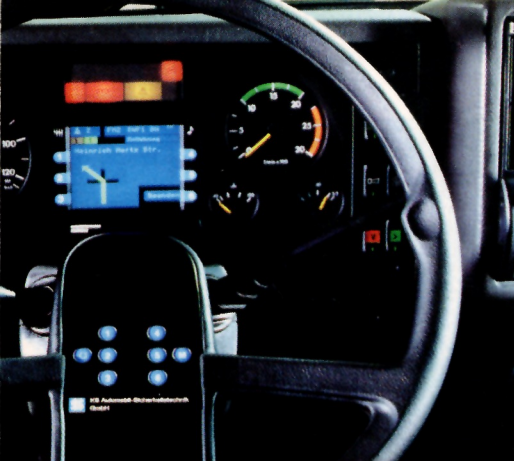
Trailers are a very rare sight behind British coaches. Yet with axle weight limit regs expected to change in 1999 and new rules for baggage allowance on new coaches likely to reduce available space, trailers may have a future.

There's one major problem. Drivers in years to come with the necessary D+E entitlement could be in short supply following the change of rule from 1 January 1997 which requires new drivers to take separate tests as part of the new staged driving test system.

First you must take a test for rigid PCVs - class D. Then, and only then, you take a separate, but identical, test with a trailer to gain +E. Not many will volunteer to go through this additional hoop but, faced with the challenge at the DSA's training centre, Mike Morgan volunteered to get behind the wheel of the agency's former-MOD Leyland Tiger with trailer attached, producing an 18 metre unit. However, the daunting prospect was the reversing manoeuvre across from the right-hand 'garage' to that on the left. Was it difficult?

Take it slowly and use your mirrors was the advice and it worked. The trailer was incredibly docile, responding instantly to gentle movement of the steering wheel.

A word of warning to would-be D+E candidates. Don't put too much of the trailer in your mirror while reversing - that's a sure sign that you're about to jackknife.



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INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT

CBW 5 PAGE SPECIAL ON BRINGING VEHICLES UP TO SPEC

Keeping in trim

The only limit to interior refurbishment is your imagination... as Mark Williams found out when he spoke to Buddens Commercial Services

EVEN BUDDENS' trimshop manager Andy Gates - with his long experience of refurbishing plush coach interiors - is impressed with the latest gadget fitted inside one of Phoenix's 'band buses.' It's a television; not just any television, but one with digital Nicam stereo and cinema-style surround sound. And it proves that, as long as you can keep the weight down to 17 tonnes, anything is possible.

It is often the lack of imagination of some operators which prevents them making a worthwhile investment in retrimms and refurbishment: "If you spend £1,500 retrimming a Paramount, you can transform it from a school bus to a coach suitable for local excursions, evening work and private hire" said Mr Gates. "It's all extra profit."

Not only that, but some new moquette - Holdsworth's Graffiti is still a favourite - can brighten up the decidedly '70s look of the then-standard, brown-with-chevrons colour scheme. Upholster centre roof panels and add some new aisle flooring and the average passenger would be hard pushed to put an age on your coach.

It's not all about pleasing the public, either. Shabby trim can attract prohibitions, and even if the seams have been oversewn, chances are the cloth is already well on the way to disintegration and susceptible to the least pull or scrape.

Aisle floors, too, tend to bubble up and tear, particularly when made of older foam-backed rubber: "That's another MoT failure, and mostly because the older materials weren't very long lasting," said Mr Gates. "We had a double-deck coach in the other day on which you could actually see two channels where people's feet had been forced to walk. The foam had collapsed completely. Modern flooring is a lot better."

There's also more choice of colour and pattern. If you don't want rubber matting up the aisle, you can buy non-slip flooring in every shade, or give your passengers the red-carpet treatment.

Even to pay for a complete retrim at something approaching £2,000 you need only add £40 a week to the vehicle's private hire profit to pay for the lot in a year. What's more, there's nothing like a smart impression to sell a secondhand vehicle - even an old one.



A £2,000 retrim can pay for itself in a year by attracting extra work

But there are also occasions when a retrim can transform one of the timeless coach bodies - a Setra Tornado, 0303, Van Hool or Neoplan - and get it back into touring trim. After all, it is mostly

the number plate and the interior which conveys the age of the vehicle.

"The classic retrim is replacing the Van Hool brown, often brightened up by changing ▶▶▶

Keeping in trim

► it to light grey," said Mr Gates. "The choice isn't always moquette, either. Swedish-made Bogesuns fabric is getting popular. It has a woven texture and is used extensively in Swedish rail and bus seats, I understand. It's dearer, but it is different."

Another refurbishment becoming more popular is the replacement of bulky water boilers with slimmer, more attractive coffee machines.

"The latest drinks machines are excellent, with a variety of configurations including those which pump water from a big storage tank. The drinks have improved, too!" said Mr Gates.

At the same time, it may be worthwhile looking at a replacement toilet - or removing the toilet altogether to raise seating capacity.

"On a time-served touring coach, it makes sense to put it on more local work, and then there's no sense in having either a toilet or water boiler. The popular Thetford toilet, tough though it is, gets a lot of abuse in a few seasons..." said Mr Gates, hinting that the cost of emptying it and keeping the nasty niffs at bay may make it a liability.

"Having said that, we fit a number of toilets to lower-spec coaches, and we also convert fixed toilets into demountable," he said.

Closed-circuit TV either for a reversing 'mirror' or to keep an eye on passengers has now become affordable - some two-camera systems costing marginally over £1,000. It's the Next Big Thing, suggests Mr Gates, and is already the subject of trials at Buddens: "It may well cut down on rear-end knocks and scrapes, not to mention accidents, and is very easy to fit," he says.

Once you start going beyond these accessories, you're into super-exec territory, but it's no secret that many band-bus operators get extra life from vehicles by giving them a complete refit. Kitchens, beds, CD players... it's unlimited. Some of Phoenix' band buses even have a full-sized domestic fridge, converted to 24V by electricrickery.

The trouble is, the more electrical items you run, the closer you edge towards the time when you need land lines for mains supply, or generators - and the latter could rush you £11,000.

"But operators of this type of vehicle are unlikely to get their investment in equipment back when they sell the vehicle on," said Mr Gates. In fact, the equipment can be a liability to a vehicle destined to 'cascade'. "They should consider having the equipment removed and installed on their next coach."

Even the simplest 'posh' extra can be surprisingly expensive: "Operators who are tempted to have reflective tinting film fitted to windows will balk at the price. It's about £1,000 a coach, and if you haven't got air conditioning, it won't last long. If there's condensation on the window, people rub at it, and that's the end of the reflective film."

But some interior refurbishments are excellent value: "A really good, thorough valeting by the professionals can have a surprising effect on the look of an interior. Most people are surprised how much it brightens things up," said Mr Gates.

Ops set the trends

PUTTING the emphasis on customer service has kept Bradtech out in front with the supply of interior equipment.

If it goes inside a coach, the Stafford firm supplies and fits it. But in recent years, Bradtech has focussed on reacting to customer demand, and identifying the changing trends rather than trying to second-guess them.

"We are no longer product-led, as we were in the past," said md William Bradburn. "We are now market-led, and it's proving to be the right thing to do. We are developing customer service with courses like NVQ, and it's something we are very proud of."

So what are the latest trends? For a start, bet-

ter-made, easy-clean, freshwater-flush toilets. Using modern moulding techniques and high-tech sealants, the modern toilet cubicle is a world away from those of ten years ago, says Mr Bradburn.

A reaction to the warmth of recent summers is for increasing numbers of operators to demand chillers and fridges. Hot-air hand dryers are also on a roll. The trouble is, says Mr Bradburn, operators and fitters are demanding them with less lead time.

"So we have had to hold more stock to react to demand, but that's all part of the service," said Mr Bradburn.

● Bradtech is on 01785 282800.



Formold's mouldings give clean lines to Wright's FirstBus interior

Instant weight loss for Wrights

THERMO-FORMING has solved a weight problem for Robert Wrights of Ballymena, which is doing away with GRP coving and replacing it with a Formold product.

The Twyford manufacturer makes an average

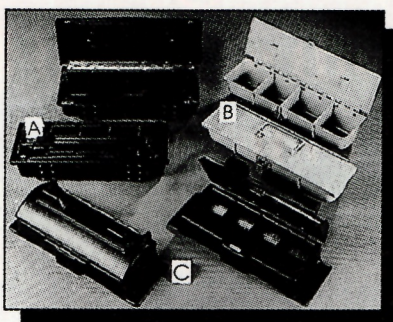
nine interior kits a week for Wrights' buses, consisting of 14 panels. They offer not only a weight advantage, but are fire retardant and more uniformly coloured, claims Formold.

● Formold is on 0118 934 0443.

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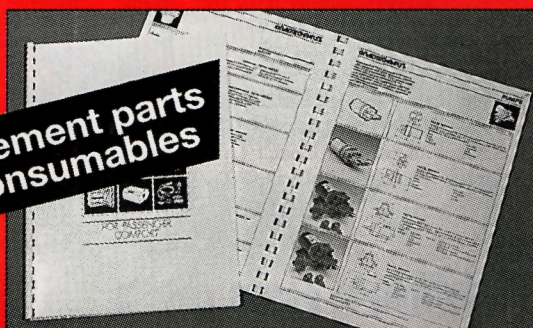
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100 down, more to come

EASTGATE Coach Trimmers is a firm favourite for refurbishment with two major dealerships.

The Pickering company, trading for 16 years, has some notable contracts under its belt, including ongoing work completely retrimming Expressliners for Kirkby Coach & Bus. So far, it has refitted more than 100, with more to come.

Eastgate has also caught the eye of Yeates Bus & Coach, which wanted a Plaxton Excalibur retrimmed. The coach was originally decked in a dull brown moquette. Eastgate brightened it up with a full retrim in patterned grey moquette, covering and renewing seat foam as needed, adding moquette to centre roof panels, racks and skylights.

"Preparation of the coach seating and interior body is just as important as the retrimming itself," said one of the proprietors, Neil Fowler. "Foams and rubber are renewed where necessary, so a 53-seater coach usually takes up to two days to complete."

Flooring is another of Eastgate's specialities, but Mr Fowler warns against doing a cheap DIY job: "We can relay centre gangways at the customer's premises, but if a full floor relaying is required, it is advisable to have the work carried out at our workshops," he said.

"A lot of unseen work may have to be undertaken, especially if wooden flooring has deteriorated, or is wet."

● Details of all Eastgate Coach Trimmers' services are available on 01751 472229.



Excalibur transformed from brown to bright and cheerful by Eastgate's retrim

Plaxton's Euro push

PLAXTON'S Bus & Coach Glazing division has extended its service deep into Europe.

The Sheffield-based company had struck a deal with glass specialists in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Netherlands has now brought in mobile technicians in Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Andorra, Estonia, Northern Poland, Hungary (around Lake Balaton), Southern Norway and Southern Spain.

"We felt that this was a necessary investment in order to continue to give our full support and back-up to our customers," said Plaxton Parts & Service md Rod May.

"Not only do we fit Plaxton glass but all popular vehicles including Van Hool, Jonckheere, Bova, Berkhof, Neoplan, Irizar, Caetano and many more coaches."

To use the Plaxton Bus & Coach Glazing European service, you must hold a current, credit account with Plaxton's depots.

● For full details, contact Dave Cooper, on 01909 551188.

Bright ideas from Transmatic

TRANSMATIC may be best known for providing the 'standard' lighting for FirstBus vehicles, but it's got plenty to offer the aftermarket, too.

The US-owned company's specialist area is lighting, which it manufactures using an electronic inverter system which can both save power and increase available light. It was developed in the late '70s for the aircraft industry, operating in temperatures down to -50°C, and launched to the coach and bus market in 1985.

Transmatic hasn't been standing still since then, and will soon launch a slimline strip lighting system, the L20, which it says will suit coaches and buses. At its heart is a lens which focuses the light directly on to passengers with very little light spill, with the result that it is 20% efficient than any other light unit and reduces windscreen glare.

As with all Transmatic products, it is supplied ready to fit... as is Transmatic's latest product, TransForm modular luggage racks.

The idea of a slot-together, modular luggage system was spawned by demand from Duple-Metsec,

who wanted something for train carriages. The result has been an entire system, adaptable to any coach or bus, which can be fitted straight out of the box. It carries the reading lights and air ducting - air-conditioned or otherwise - and can be supplied with aircraft doors if needed.

"It's perfect for coach refurbishment," said md Terry Calnon. "It comes with all the cabling built in, so that fitting is quick and easy."

Another of Transmatic's latest products is a self-diagnostic lighting unit. In the past, operators often returned completely functional Transmatic inverters when, in fact, the vehicle's wiring was at fault. The new inverter has a red warning light which predicts failing fluorescent tubes, and another which indicates power supply is OK.

"It was never a problem for us to test the inverter and send it back, but operators wasted a lot of time by not knowing what was failing," said Mr Calnon.

● Contact Transmatic on 01952 608383, fax 01952 677693.

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INTERIOR REFURBISHMENT



Keeping up appearances: all Trent's buses are cleaned by Cleaning Services

Clean sweep for Trent Buses

CLEANING SERVICES UK'S specialisation in buses was one factor which helped Trent & Barton Buses achieve the accolade of Best Bus Company in the UK earlier this year.

Having taken on the cleaning of all Trent's buses, running from 15 depots, Cleaning Services has worked out strict routines which range from removing graffiti and gum to deep-cleaning upholstery with a hot-water extraction process.

The amount of work varies by bus and by bus route, says Cleaning Services md Andrew Gibson: "Some vehicles deposit black heating stains

on the roof coving, some have high ceilings, and those with rarely glazed fronts can be difficult to clean.

"We are also responsible for station cleaning and even the fuelling and oiling of the vehicles in some of the depots, requiring our staff to park buses in readiness for driver shifts."

Trent says it has not only speeded up its cleaning routines but saved money by placing its work with Cleaning Services.

● Contact Cleaning Services on 0115 977 0355, fax 0115 977 0962.

Get a grip with Gabriel clip-on



Update with style

WHEN UPGRADING the interior of your bus fleet, smarten up and modernise the handrails and stanchions with Gabriel's new plastic handgrip - and its matching bell push. It could make any interior look more modern.

The shroud which clips around standard-width handrail is available in a range of colours, with or without the bell push.

For a more extensive refurbishment, Gabriel also supplies the textured handrail either nylon coated or with an epoxy finish.

● Full details from Gabriel, on 0121 248 3330.

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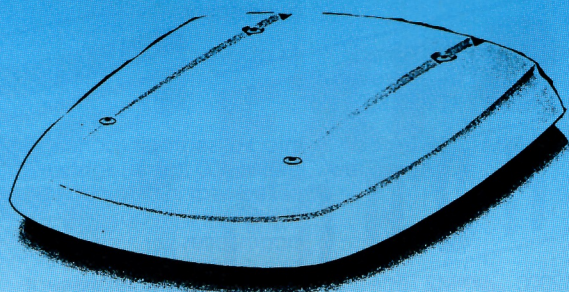
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Not just gum but labels too can be removed

Labels come unstuck

IF graffiti's bad enough, try removing sticky labels and old vinyls from highly-polished surfaces... it's a job for Concept's Chu-Sol.

This aerosol designed with chewing gum in mind also penetrates labels and softens the adhesive. The aftermath of vinyls can also be removed without the danger of scraping the underlying paintwork.

Chu-Sol may also be just what the bodyshop needs to get parts labels off new panels ready for paint.

● Concept Chemicals is on 0161 335 0213, fax 0161 335 0214.

Say cheese to CCTV

THE PLUMMETING cost of electronics has placed CCTV rear view monitors well within the reach of any refurbishment project.

Kocom Vehicle Rear Viewer is typical of the high quality of current CCTV, offering an infrared camera which operates independent of low light conditions, and a dashboard-mounted monitor.

It can be used, mounted inside the rear screen, to prevent reversing accidents, or even mounted internally to monitor passengers.

The advantages of the video view are obvious for coaches with a blanked rear, but even for

those with a screen, the blind spots behind the vehicle are enormous; operators whose vehicles use busy bus stations should be particularly interested, since reversing accidents are not only common but costly.

Operators with cramped depot parking might also find the investment in a rear-view camera worthwhile. Compared with the cost of replacing bumpers, rear light clusters and boot lids, CCTV is cheap.

● Kocom Vehicle Rear Viewer is marketed by George Elliott plc at Westerham, Kent, on 01959 562198.

FirstBus approves Delta 200

FIRSTBUS has added Delta 200 to its approved list of cleaning materials, after chewing over a sticky problem.

The problem of chewing gum - 935 million packets a year are munched - is one which plagues bus and coach fleets. Delta 200 removes the gum without dissolving more than the adhesion layer.

Non-aerosol and environmentally friendly, the non-hazardous agent can be applied directly to both hard and soft surfaces like fabrics. Delta also suggests operators remind gum chewers of the golden rules - Keep the Wrapper, Enjoy the Gum, Wrap It and Bin It.

● Delta AG Ltd can be reached on 01934 843845.



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Right time for Ludlow's

AVE BERKHOF

THIS single, Javelin 300GX-based Berkhof Axial is one of three new coaches going into the fleet of Ludlows of Halesowen.

Better known as a bus operator, Ludlows has quietly built a good following for its tours and excursions and a solid private hire market, said director Andy Ludlow. The time was right for a coach investment.

"Though I like the Axial body, I have to say that the bodywork didn't bother me unduly," said Mr Ludlow. "The deal was a very good one, and included the Javelin chassis, which I wanted."

Mr Ludlow said fuel economy had come to the fore in his buying decision, and a test with a Scania, Volvo and Dennis running side by side put the Javelin ahead by 11 gallons on a round trip to Blackpool: "That's a large chunk of a driver's wages," he told CBW.

"We get between 13 and 14 to the gallon on some work with the Javelins, which run rings round some heavyweights. They pull to the 62mph limit as well as most coaches."

Ludlows currently runs 30 Leyland Nationals on its Halesowen bus work, and has seven coaches. The other two, new coaches are to be announced soon.



Diplomat status for Man City

MOSELEY PCV

EYMS GROUP subsidiary Finglands Coachways of Manchester has revived the Diplomat name, formerly used by its parent group in Hull, with the delivery of its latest executive coach, whose primary duty is as team coach for Manchester City FC.

The Van Hool Alizee-bodied Volvo B10M replaces a Berkhof bodied B10M, which remains the number two executive, but the resultant cascading and withdrawal of a Plaxton-bodied B10M, means that coaching strength of the company remains at 12.

Purchased from Moseley PCV stock, the B10M was fitted out by A&D Conversions of Congleton to a design suggested by Man City



manager Frank Clark. The 33-seater is separated into two seating sections by a separate galley, each with their separate sound and video systems.

Most seats are grouped around tables with 12 seats fore, and 21 seats aft.

The galley features additional refrigeration, microwave oven and

hot box as well as the usual washing and toilet facilities.

Finglands' managing director Graeme Rayner said that he was pleased with the both the speed and quality of the interior conversion: "In addition to its team work, the coach is also busy on high quality corporate hires."

Applegates

ROBIN HOOD

GLOUCESTERSHIRE-BASED Applegates Supreme Coaches hand-picked this RH2000 from the range of midcoaches available for its extra height, air conditioning and extras.

A combination of tour work and airport transfers demanded a mid-coach with quality at its heart, and proprietor Frank Applegate felt that the Mercedes-Benz 0814D Vario



investment



hand-picks RH2000 midi

chassis cowl on which the RHVI-built vehicle is based offered the right combination of performance and reliability.

"In short, the RH2000 had everything I wanted, with the best features being the air conditioning, the fridge and the water boiler," said Mr Applegate.

"We have also operated Optimos and, though we liked them, they often fell short of boot space.

Though we have liveried trailers to go with the RH2000, the boot provided is excellent.

"I have also been impressed with the seating, and the fact that it's a full six inches higher than in the Optimo. People still want to see over the hedges."

Applegates, based in Berkeley, runs 14 vehicles, including four front-line, full-sized coaches, a bus on local service work, and a fleet of minibuses.



IN BRIEF



Debut Pointers for Provincial

SIXTEEN of these Plaxton/Pointer 2 Dart SLFs have joined FirstBus subsidiary Provincial in Portsmouth. The vehicles replace a similar number of Leyland Nationals on city

centre bus routes.

Though these buses are Provincials first Pointers they followed delivery of 20 of Plaxton Beaver midibuses last year.



Group Travel's matching pair

STOURBRIDGE operator Group Travel Limited has taken a matching pair of these Berkhof Axials with Volvo B10M chassis for its tour work.

Supplied by AVE Berkhof before the dealership moved to Basingstoke, the 49-seaters have air conditioning and centre toilet, video and peage windows.



Barnsley gets first Millennia

THREE of these newly-designed Crystals Millennia midis were bought by Barnsley Community Transport on tender without the organisation having seen the vehicle first hand. The 25-seaters, with six wheelchair spaces, have Unwin tracking and a Ratcliff lift mounted on the rear nearside.



American safety device can reduce rear wheel injuries and insurance costs

Unitec to import wheel 'dam'

OPTARE engineering subsidiary Unitec is expecting to get the first right-hand drive samples of an American bus safety device next spring.

The S1-GARD is simplicity itself - a plastic guard which attaches just in front of the 'danger' wheel - the

nearside rear, involved in the vast majority of coach and bus accidents. The guard closes the gap between the floorpan of the vehicle and the ground, masking the tyre surface.

This polyurethane 'bumper,' mounted only a

few inches from the ground, deflects anything in front of the tyre, preventing horrific injuries caused by passengers being trapped under the rotating wheel, says the United States manufacturer, PTS Corporation.

"All too often we read of

tragic accidents concerning passengers who, for various and sometimes incompressible reasons, find themselves under the nearside rear wheels of coaches with catastrophic results," said Unitec aftersales director Peter Hale. "The S1-

GARD has been developed in California - the most litigious society in the world."

The cost - direct or indirect - of meeting claims for negligent injury in America is soaring, and the signs are that the UK is following suit.

Kienzle unveils electronic tachos

VDO KIENZLE has been giving operators a glimpse of the future for tachographs with its prototype, digital 1B tacho.

The unit does away with the need for tacho discs, using computer-accessed memory cards instead. Because both driver and machine have a record of the entire driving pattern, it eliminates tacho fraud and, using established data downloading into PCs through its own software, allows the operator to get instant and automatic analysis of tacho records.

The EU is currently examining the introduction of electronic tacho cards,

and the close focus of the Vehicle Inspectorate and Police on drivers' hours plus the onus established in court for operators to make regular checks may make the electronic tacho the perfect solution to the unwieldiness of the paper disc system.

At the heart of VDO Kienzle's tacho is a central, on-vehicle data bank which records a full year's driving record for the vehicle. The driver has his own memory card, which carries his photo and personal details. It stores 28 days' data, including all information currently required for tacho records.

Using the tacho, the driver/operator can not only



Standard tachograph dial but electronic data records are now possible

access all the records on his own card, but those on the vehicle data bank, and all information from both

devices can not only be downloaded to a laptop computer, but printed directly via a special inter-

face. Kienzle's fleet management system, into which the tacho dovetails, is run with the Windows platform.

Special squirts

NO MATTER what the job, it seems Gulf has an aerosol to suit!

Gulf Lubricants' enormous range of specialised spray-on greases, coatings and oils encompass every task from releasing GRP mouldings to preventing welding spatter from sticking. In between are products like Gear Guard - an open-gear lubricant designed to operate in hostile environments - and Real Ease, a penetrating oil to help remove siezed components.

Gulf also makes Moly Chain and Drive - useful for chain-driven mechanisms such as wheelchair lifts -



Gulf: big on aerosols

WD Plus for general applications and water dispersal, and HD Cleaner Xcell, a non-chlorinated heavy-duty degreaser/cleaner which can be washed off with water.

● For full details of Gulf Lubricants, contact customer services on 01242 225588.

No loss drum-tap

A DRUM TAP which not only controls flow of fluids such as lubricants from plastic and steel drums, it also removes then replaces the original bung, is being marketed by an Uckfield company.

Agriemach's TAPPO variable flow valve is designed to be fitted to drums mounted on their side. Hand-operated, TAPPO fits over the original bung, which it unscrews, with draws and retains, then allowing safe a speedy flow through large-bore pipe.

When the drum is empty, or needs to be moved, TAPPO's action can be reversed, to replace the



TAPPO's got it taped

bung without spillage or waste.

TAPPO is designed for use with Trisure and similar non-metallic bungs, and comes in nylon and fibre-filled polyprop versions to cope with most fluids.

● Full details of TAPPO, contact Agriemach on 01825 769277, fax 01825 768330.

More floors

FLOORING specialist James Halstead of Manchester has re-formulated its non-slip Polysafe floors and added a range of new colours.

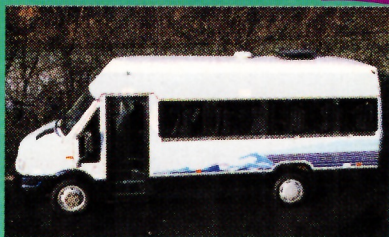
The vinyl Polysafe Vogue flooring, impregnated with silicon carbide and aluminium oxide, comes in a dozen shades to match the great variety of interiors now being fitted not only to buses but to minibuses and welfare vehicles.

The new material has better slip and abrasion resistance, claims Halstead's Polyflor division.

● Details are from James Halstead Ltd, on 0161 767 1111, fax 0161 767 1128.



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Volvo. Coach of the Year
for the third consecutive year.

EXPRESS TRAVEL (Holdings) LTD

July 1993
VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE

46 seats, toilet, servery, overhead lockers. ZF S685 Manual Gearbox. ABS, 3-piece windscreen, destination. CHOICE OF 3

£95,000 ono

Ring Ian Hann on 0151 281 2811



Express Travel (Holdings) Ltd

July 1992

VOLVO B10M Plaxton Premiere

★ 46 seats, toilet, servery, overhead lockers

★ ZF fully automatic gearbox, integral retarder, ABS, 3-piece windscreen, digital destination

£89,950 ono

Ring Ian Hann on 0151 281 2811

1990 B10M Ikarus, 49 seats . . . £60,500
1990 B10M Ikarus, 53 seats . . . £51,500
1986 Scania K112 Jonckheere, 49 seats . . . £35,000
1984 Scania K112 Jonckheere, 49 seats . . . £31,250
1985 Bedford YNV Duple Lazer, 53 seats . . . £9,500

All the above vehicles are MoT'd + fitted with seat belts

MARSHALLS COACHES

Tel: Fred Marshall
01525 376077

1979 DAF MB200 DKL 12 MTR PLAXTON SUPREME 4

Power door, 6 speed, ZF with splitter - engine rebuild June 1997, 53 seats, decorative curtains, centre aisle carpet.

Good condition all round, tested August 1998.

Price:

£8,450 ono + VAT

Telephone: 0191 5862136

1986 MAN WHIPPET MIDICOACH

25 reclining seats plus courier, curtains, carpet, boot space, power door, MoT Feb '98

£9,000 plus VAT

1984 DAF MB200 DFKL

Berkhof Esprite 53 recliners, power door, owned by us since new, full service history, test July '98

£20,000 + VAT

DAVIAN COACHES

ENFIELD 0181-805-4226

1987
DAF MB2300 PLAXTON 3200
52 seats plus toilet and drinks machine, MoT February 1998 £32,000 ono

1988
DAF DHTD PLAXTON 3200 LOWDRIVER

53 recliners, radio cassette, PA, a classy motor, MoT August 1998 £42,000

1988
DAF MB230 PLAXTON 3500
51 seats, toilet, drinks, MoT Dec 98, excellent condition £45,000 + VAT ono

DAVID OGDEN COACHES
TEL: (01744) 851118

Dunn-Line Of Nottingham

BOVA FUTURA 1993 (K), 51/56 seater, owned from new . . . £85,000
VOLVO JONCKHEERE 1988 (PP), 49 seater plus toilet . . . £59,950
VOLVO PLAXTON 3500, 49 plus toilet, 1986 . . . £37,500
VOLVO DUPLÉ 1987, service bus, choice of 3 . . . £29,950
SCANIA/JONCKHEERE 1986, service bus . . . £17,950
VOLVO/DOMINANT, with wheelchair lift, 43 seats, plus some tracking . . . £4,000

ALL PRICES ARE EXCLUDING VAT
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1 - LEYLAND LEOPARD
Rebody, 62 seat service bus
£3,000

6 - FORD TRANSIT MINIBUSES

(5-20 seaters, 1-18 seater), all MoT'd, some with long tests
£2,250 each

All vehicles available immediately and are ono + VAT

Contact:

Matt Evans or Richard Yoxall
on 01543 466123

We have for sale
1984 Van Hool Super High Volvo B10M

49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, Jason coffee boiler system, TV and video, 10 months test, very good condition

Price £38,500 ono + VAT

If anybody would like to take our vehicle in part exchange we are looking for 88/89/90 B10M any body considered

Contact No

0191 3840659/0191 3842873

Mobile: 0802 676128

Ask for Danny

EBDON'S COACHES LTD FOR SALE:

All in excellent condition

1 x NEOPLAN SKYLINER - 1991 (77 seats)

1 x NEOPLAN SKYLINER - 1990 (79 seats)

1 x NEOPLAN CITYLINER - 1994 (50 seats)

1 x SCANIA CENTURY - 1995 (48 seats)

MERCEDES 0303 HIGH DECK (Choice)

MERCEDES 0303 low deck (Choice)

1 x DROGMULLER COMET (Merc)

1 x LEYLAND CUB - 1993 (32 seats)

1 x RENAULT DODGE - 1989 (45 seats)

1 x HEAVY DUTY COACH TRAILER

1 x MERCEDES 608D - (19 seats)

1 x HOSPITALITY BUS

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0181 302 2908

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Power door,
MoT Feb '98

£1,600

incl. extensive spares
from similar bus

01322 665533
(Swanley)

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1985 BEDFORD YNV, 53 seater, Duple Laser II bodywork, Elite seatbelts, MoT March '98, radio cassette, PA, curtains. . . **£17,500**

1980 LEYLAND LEOPARD, re-bodied '91, Willowbrook Warrior II Service Bus, Diptac spec, 48 seater, 22 standees, MoT Jan '98 . . . **£16,000**

1992 IVECO LORRAINE, 26 seater, COIF to 30 with seats, beautiful proper little coach, Elite seatbelts, radio cassette, PA, trims and curtains, MoT April '98 . . . **£37,500**

Give Rod a ring on 01285 653985

ALEX CARS OF CIRENCESTER

All reasonable offers considered

VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P599, 1983, 48 seater, rear sunken toilet, TV, video etc, choice of 2 **£25,000**
LEYLAND LEOPARD WILLOWBROOK, 1982, 49 dual purpose seats, MoT April '98 **£2,500**
LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON VIEWMASTER, 1977, 53 seater with lap belts, express doors, S/A, MoT February 1998. **£2,750**
LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME, 1979, 49 seater, power door, S/A without MoT **£2,850**
 12 months MoT **£3,450**
MAN REEVES BURGESS 28 seater power door, 1983 A reg, tested March '98, lower half repainted, painted white, 2 point inertia reel belts **£5,500**
1985 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 seater, sunken toilet, wired TV/Video etc, 11 months MoT **£29,000**
DAF MB200 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 53 seater + toilet, video, TV etc, 1983, PP, MoT February 1998, bodywork very tatty, cheap to clear **£16,000**
 Stock changing daily, phone with your requirements
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 ALL VEHICLES ONO + VAT
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SCANIA K93, Plaxton 3200

1990 (H)

Fully fitted with seatbelts, radio/cassette/PA, full draw curtains, 53 seats plus courier, MoT to May, tax to July, one owner from new, good condition.

NEEDS TO BE SEEN

£56,500 ono

Quick Sale Required

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72138/CM

Williamsons Holidays

1996 (N) SCANIA K113TRB - IRIZAR CENTURY, 49/51 reclining seats, air conditioned, Blaupunkt audio equipment, twin monitors, Webasto heating system, seat back tables, blinds and curtains, hot and cold drinks facilities, centre WC **£139,500 + VAT**
1994 (M) DENNIS JAVELIN - PLAXTON PREMIERE 320, 57 seater with belts, radio/PA, excellent condition REDUCED TO SELL ONLY **£79,500 Yes £79,500 + VAT**
1993 (K) EOS 200 - MAN ENGINE, 48/52 reclining seats, Blaupunkt radio equipment, twin monitors, Webasto heating system, blinds and curtains, centre wc, (this is an EOS 200 not 100 model), hot and cold drink facilities **£99,500 + VAT**
1989 (G) LAG PANORAMIC - (DAF POWERED), 49 seater reclining seats, air conditioned, Blaupunkt audio equipment, twin monitors, Webasto, blinds and curtains, centre WC, hot and cold drinks facilities **£49,500 + VAT**
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 All the above vehicles have been owned by us since new. All in excellent condition, all with current MoTs
 Also **1980 (PP) VOLVO B58 - PLAXTON**, 12 MTR SUPREME, 53 reclining seats, courier seat, power door **£8,000 + VAT**
1989 (F) LEYLAND TIGER DUPLÉ 320, 53 seater (Cert for 61 seats), power express doors, destination equipment **£29,000 + VAT**
 Phone (01691) 682232 Office Hours or (0836) 569406 any other time

72147/CM

1984 MAN SR 280

53 seats, reupholstered, P.P. Wired for TV/video. Voith retarder, taxed and 11 months MoT. Superb all round condition.

£15,000+VAT

Tel: 01179 665801
ext 207

72139/CM

1989 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL H/L

49 recliner seats, with toilet, wired for TV & video, very reliable vehicle. New clutch and turbo fitted.
MoT May '98.

£67,500 ono

Tel: 0131 555 0034

71241/CM

FIAT CAETANO BEEJA 6010, 1984

18-seater minicoach, good condition, with belts, tax 1st '98, tested Feb '98 **£3,850 ono**

BEDFORD 500 SUPREME 4

53-seater with belts, express doors, tested April '98 **£3,450 ono**

Tel 01993 776473 (day)
or 01993 846631 (eve)

71231/CM

PLAXTON ELITE 3 1975 VOLVO B58

53-seater, new seats throughout, seatbelts, 4 heaters.

Recent full engine rebuild. ZF 6-speed gearbox, anti-theft alarm.

Very good looking vehicle.

£7,500 ono

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72145/CM

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51 recliner seats with toilet, H&C water, fridge, Telma, MoT May '98.

£62,500 ono

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71242/CM

Due to re-organisation we have the following vehicles for sale:

1975 Leyland Leopard 43 seat coach - good Leyland 680 engine, no Mot **£2,000 ono**

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1985 Renault Master 15 seat minibus or 5 seats + 5 wheelchairs, tail lift - 12 months MoT **£3,000 ono**

Tel/fax: (0161) 624 5272
9.30 am - 4.30 pm weekdays

79653/CM

Scotland

AEC REGENT, 3DD, 1948
TIGER PARAMOUNT 3500,
1984

ATLANTEAN, DD 1981
ATLANTEAN, Open Top 1965
FORD DUPLÉ, 35 seater,
1982

Series 307D 1986, 8 seats,
tail lift

All above current MoT's

Tel: 01333 350550

Details on application

72161/CM

FOR SALE OR TO HIRE

3 x LEYLAND Leopard Alexander

53 seat + 24 standees. T reg, service buses, semi-auto/power steering - all with MoTs.
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48 seat. X reg, semi coach, semi-auto/power steering, MoT.
£3,750 + VAT

72092/CM

Tel: 01204 668112

SCANIA K112 PLAXTON 3500 1989 F REG

Fully fitted with seat belts, demountable toilet, full draw curtains, 49/55 seats, 12 months MoT, 1 owner from new, good condition

0181 366 4337

Mobile: 0958 575154

72094/CM

1993 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE

3.3m, 49 seats, centre toilet, servery, air conditioning, MoT December 1998.

Available early January.

CHOICE OF 3 VEHICLES

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72093/CM

FORD TRANSIT MINI BUS J 1992

Petrol, 14 passenger seats, seatbelts fitted, full year PSV, MoT, C.O.I.F.

Full maintenance history. Includes heavy duty roof rack and cover.

£5,500 ono + VAT

Tel: 01225 469293

73660/CM

EBDONS COACHES LTD

For sale, all in excellent condition

1 x NEOPLAN SKYLINER, 1991 (77 seats)
1 x NEOPLAN SKYLINER, 1990 (79 seats)
1 x NEOPLAN CITYLINER, 1994 (50 seats)
1 x SCANIA CENTURY, 1995 (48 seats)
MERCEDES 0303, high deck (choice)
MERCEDES 0303, low deck (choice)
1 x OROGMULLER COMET, (Merc)
1 x LEYLAND CUB, 1993, 32 seats
1 x RENAULT DODGE, 1989, 45 seats
1 x HEAVY DUTY COACH TRAILER - SOLD
1 x MERCEDES 608D, 19 seats
1 x HOSPITALITY BUS

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73659/CM

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1989 LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS) PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500
Specification: 49 recliners, toilet, wired for video, radio cass/PA, boiler, immaculate cond. **Only £42,950**

1988 DAF BOVA FUTURA FHD
Specification: 49/53 recliners, demountable toilet, wired for video, radio/cassette/PA, boiler **Only £44,950**

1987 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500
49 recliners, toilet, wired for video, radio cassette/PA, boiler. Owned by us from new. **Only £47,500**

1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500
49 recliners, toilet, wired for video, radio cassette/PA, boiler. Owned by us from new. **Only £63,500**

For further information contact Neil Herbert **0191 296 0808**

72163/CM

1989 IVECO FORD, 25 seat
minibus, fitted seatbelts, tested October 1998 **£4,500 ono**

1988 FREIGHT ROVER
SHERPA 300 SERIES, 16 seat
minibus, standard height, seatbelts, radio, tested **£2,500 ono**

All prices plus VAT

Please ring for further details

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Nr Northallerton

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Currently breaking: Leopard, B58 Volvo, Bedford, Ford etc, Plaxton, Duple, Alexander bodies

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**88 SCANIA K112 CRB
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ZF gearbox, 51R+C, retarder, video/monitor, radio/PA/cassette, drivers bunk, drinks machine, refrigerator, continental door and centre sunken toilet.



**92 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON
EXCALIBUR**

ZF gearbox, 51R+C, retarder, video/monitor, radio/PA/cassette, rear toilet and continental door



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ZF 6 speed gearbox, 49/53R+C, radio/PA/cassette, drinks machine, refrigerator, centre sunken toilet and continental door

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Andrew Hamilton	0589 444737

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James Sloan 01909 500822

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**92 MERCEDES 0303 JONCKHEERE
DEAUVILLE**

ZF gearbox, 55R+C, video/monitor, radio/PA/cassette and full seat belts



88 DAF INTEGRAL FUTURA

ZF 6 speed gearbox, 49R+C, radio/PA/cassette, continental door and centre sunken toilet



**88 SCANIA K112CRB VAN HOOL
ALIZEE DH**

GS772 gearbox, 50R+C, retarder, rear saloon toilet, drinks machine and continental door, repainted into stock white.



**84 SCANIA K112CRB JONCKHEERE
P50**

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BEDFORD

1983 BEDFORD DOMINANT IV 500 TURBO, 6 speed box, many new parts fitted inc water and fuel pumps, seatbelts, clutch and new wiper system, MoT till Oct '98, loss of contract forces sale, genuine coach, no time wasters please, **£4,500 + VAT. 01271 343601 (North Devon).**

72120/BE

BEDFORD FOR SALE, 1984 Duple Lazer 500 Turbo, 53 seater. 1981 Dom 3 500 Turbo, 53 seater. 1975 Dom 1, 45 seater. Tel: **Matts Coaches 01623 650241.**

72130/BE

1977 BEDFORD YMT, 53 seater, Dom II, p/door, reasonable condition, good runner, no MoT, spares or repair. **£1,500 ono. Tel: 01692 500904.**

72122/BE

PLAXTON YMT 1981, test December 1998, one owner from new. **£4,250 + VAT. Kimes Coaches, Sleaford Tel: 01529 497251.**

72088/BE

BOVA

BREAKING BOVA EUROPA, 1983, complete except engine and gearbox. Tel: **01873 855832, Mobile: 0973 218127.**

72016/BO

BOVA FUTURA 85, 49 seats, courier, TV/video, coffee machine, toilet, double glazed, tinted windows, P/P, good condition throughout, **£31,000 + VAT. Tel: 01277 372693**

72155/BO

BOVA

1983 BOVA x2 MoT May and August 1998, £17,000 each + VAT ono. 1981 BOVA x1 MoT February 1998, £15,000 + VAT ono. All vehicles painted white, new seats just re-trimmed/PP. Telephone **(01494) 864346 (Bucks).**

72117/BOV

BRISTOL

1982 BRISTOL L85, 35 seats, P.D., P.S., MoT February '98, needs retrim, good mechanical condition, **£3,750 ono. Tel: 01384 393339.**

72111/BR

DAF

BREAKING 1988 DAF SB2300 Duple 340 body, all parts available. Tel: **01873 855832; Mobile: 0973 218127.**

72015/DAF

1982 Bova Europa

PP, 49 reclining seats, Plain white exterior, maroon interior, carpets and curtains to match, wired for TV, Radio/PA systems. Recent new reconditioned engine and gearbox, rear demountable toilet

£10,250 ono

Tel: **0181 951 4444**
or **0958 318171**

73617/DAF

DAF

1993 DAF SB3000 VAN HOOL

Air conditioned, 48 recliners, plus courier, wc and hot water boiler, curtains, Webasto, continental exit, fully automatic ZF gearbox, good condition, will supply with 12 months MoT

£88,000 + VAT

Choice of 2, P/X considered

Tel: **01708 864911**

Frank Harris or Ian Pacey

73651/DAF

***White Vanhool DAF* 1160 Mid Engine**. 50 reclining seats, curtains, tinted windows. New toilet, coffee/tea machine, wired for TV/video. 12 months test and 6 months tax. Good condition. **£35,000 + vat. Private Plates. Tel: 01207 271792.**

72010/DAF

86 DAF LAG PANORAMIC. ZF gearbox, 49 R+C, radio/PA/cassette, driver's bunk, drinks machine, continental door, refrigerator and centre sunken toilet. Please contact **Scania Bus & Coach UK Ltd** for further details. **01909 500822.**

67265/DAF

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72129/DD

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1989 G Ford Transit DI diesel 14-seat van conversion, PSV'd by us this year, Richards and Shaw blue/grey moquette coach seats with 3-point belts and matching front seats, radio/cassette, stainless steel wheel trims, resprayed/retrimmed interior panels and new door skins this year, immaculate vehicle, £5,995.

1977 PP Bristol LHS6L Plaxton Supreme 30-seat coach, Plaxton Supreme IV front, fitted with Plaxton Relaxa reclining seats with armrests, refurbished and retrimmed in brown centre-pattern moquette by us in 1996, resprayed cream by us in 1997, absolutely outstanding vehicle for year, £5,995

1987 D Renault S56 19 seat coach, Alexander Am type alloy bodywork, automatic gearbox, power door, retrimmed in Holdsworth Graffiti moquette, saloon heater, luggage area, good condition, ideal dual-purpose vehicles, resprayed white, one only, £4,995 READY NOW

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1989 G Iveco 49.10 TurboDaily Carlyle Mark II 23/5-seat bus, power steering, 5-speed manual gearbox, beige/orange interior, power door, optional luggage pen, wide entrance door, one only, £7,495

1989 G Renault S56 Mark II Northern Counties 25-seat bus, coachbuilt front, Perkins 4-litre 4-cylinder turbo diesel, disc brakes, automatic gearbox, attractive red moquette interior, power door, one only, £6,495

1988 F MCW MetroRider SWB 25-seat bus, disc brakes, Cummins engine, Allison 4-speed automatic, attractive grey stripe interior, price includes full underbody overhaul, panel replacement and respray in your livery as well as our usual pre package, one only, £7,495

1988 E Freight Rover Sherpa 350 with Carlyle Mark II 20-seat bus bodywork, 5-speed manual, power door, beige/orange interior, full underbody overhaul with new chassis rails and floor crossmembers, one only MoT'd, prepared and resprayed in brilliant white, £3,495

1987 E Freight Rover Sherpa 20-seat bus, Carlyle Mark II bodywork, Ford DI engine and gearbox, beige/orange interior, power door, price includes full underbody overhaul with new chassis rails and floor crossmembers, one only, £4,695

1987 E Renault S56 Mark I 19/21 seat buses, Alexander all-alloy bodywork, saloon heaters, optional luggage pens, automatic gearboxes, choice of three, excellent value at just £3,695 each

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1988 E Freight Rover Sherpa Carlyle Mark II 20-seat minibuses, new MoT's
1987 E Optare City Pacers, 21/25 seats, manual gearboxes, two owners only from new, choice of two, long MoT's - THESE VEHICLES ARE AVAILABLE AT EXCELLENT PRICES ON AN "AS SEEN" BASIS ONLY!!

1987 D Freight Rover Elme 16-seat luxury coach, large luggage boot, one only

1984 A Mercedes 608D Alexander 21-seat service bus, long MoT

1989 G Volkswagen LT55 Optare City Pacer II 25-seater, dual purpose low-back individual seats, fitted with Mercedes 3.78 litre engine, Mercedes 5-speed gearbox, power steering and high-speed back axle - unique vehicle, one only

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1988 E Renault S56 Mark II Northern Counties 25-seat bus, coachbuilt front end, Perkins 4 cylinder Phaser/automatic, long MoT, resprayed white, seat belts, £4,195

1986 D Freight Rover Sherpa 20-seat bus, Carlyle Mark I bodywork, Ford DI diesel engine and 5-speed Ford MT75 gearbox, orange/white exterior, MoT 03/98, one only £2,895

1986 C Mercedes 307D Whittaker 12-seat coach, high roof, blue moquette high back seats with Safetex height-adjustable lap and diagonal belts and fitting certificate, MoT 02/98, nice clean coach for year, £2,995

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R Iveco Ford 49-10 Turbo D. Super luxury 19 seater executive coach. Coach rear end with small boot. Super luxury M2, full sized coach seats with Fainsa luxury armrests. Glass coach plug door. Super luxury coach fittings and interior trim. **From £160 p week**

R Mercedes Benz Sprinter. Turbo D. Medium wheelbase, super luxury executive 12 seater mini coach. Superbly spacious. Full sized M2 luxury coach seats. Air conditioning. Side skirts. Timber cappings with luxury curtains. Drop step front entry. **From £115 p week**

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R Renault Master. Luxury 13 passenger wheelchair accessible mini coach. Raised floor with hidden chair lift. Moquette trim and luxury fittings. Low entry step. Side skirts. Panoramic tinted windows. Front passenger captains seats and much much more. **From £121 p week**

R Renault Messenger B110. Luxury 18 passenger wheelchair accessible mini coach. Raised floor pan with no wheel arch intrusion. Multiple wheelchair positions. Tracked rear M2 seating. Luxury moquette trim. Front entry with drop step. Side skirts. Under body wheel chair lift. A true dual role vehicle. **From £164 p week**

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N Volkswagen diesel. Luxury 8 seater Taxi buses. Choice of colours. New super luxury Jubilee conversions. High backed M2 seats in moquette. Tracking for one wheelchair passenger. Options for front and rear luggage. Superb throughout. **From £59 p week**

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Previously owned vehicles

P Fiat Scudo. Wheelchair accessible Taxi bus. Rear Rolac ramp. Tracked seating. Luxury trim. PAS, tinted windows. Metallic paint. Very low mileage. **POA**

N Ford Jubilee EuroCab. Executive 8 seater taxi with full EuroCab body style kit. Semi raised roof. Alloy wheels. Luxury moquette trim. Tracked seating. Wheelchair access. Cost over £25,000 new. **Opportunity at only £16,995**

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M Ford Transit 2.5 D. 8 and 12 seaters. Choice of 5. Various colours. Standard roof and semi high models available. M2 seats and seatbelts. Choice of seating plans. **3 left**

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K Nissan Diesel. 6 and 7 seaters. Low mileage. New luxury trim. Wheelchair accessible. Choice of colours and specifications. Top value for money. **From just £8,995**

K Renault Traffic 8 seater Taxi buses. Choice of 2 with wheelchair access. Low mileage. Mint condition. Perfect for local wheelchair contracts. Top value for money. **One left**

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92 J reg

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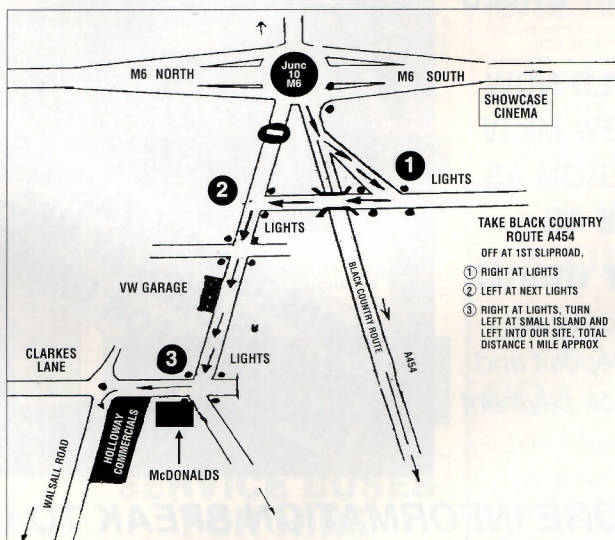
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1985 LEYLAND TIGER 245 TL11, BERKHOF EVEREST, 49 reclining seats and courier seat, continental door, sunken toilet, wiring for video.
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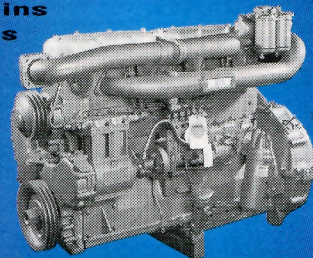
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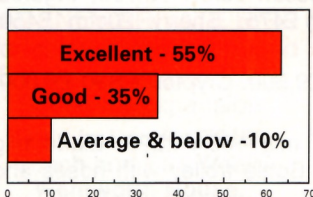
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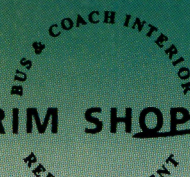
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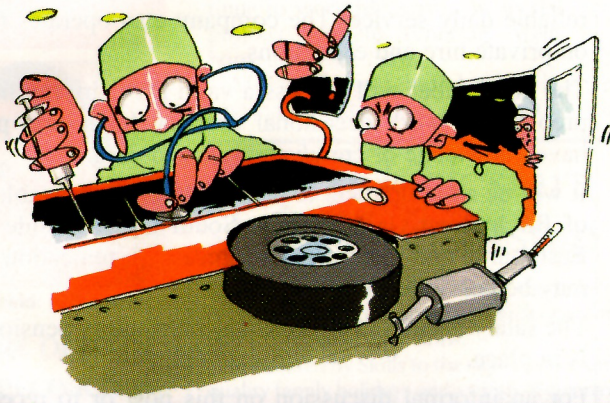
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Retirement of John Piper

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR of Invictaway and divisional director of Arriva (formerly Cowies)-owned British Bus, John Piper, has retired.

Mr Piper is replaced by Brian Jackson, previously md at Yorkshire Buses, who will take over both Mr Piper's main duties, though Mr Piper will continue to work for Arriva on special projects from his Tunbridge Wells home until June 1998.

Mr Piper entered the industry as its first indentured apprentice for South-

down, at Portslade, in 1959. His first post with Maidstone & District was in 1966, where he was technical assistant but in 1969, he moved on to Western Welsh as assistant chief engineer.

He then went back to Southdown in a similar role in 1972 before taking the chief engineer's post at Potteries Traction in 1975.

He followed this with a move to Northern General of Gateshead, before "tiring" of NBC and building up the business of a small engineering

unit in Kent as a diversion.

He worked for an oil company until 1989, when he joined London & Country as engineering director, then moved up to joint md in 1991. He was made md of Kentish Bus in 1994, and added md of Maidstone & District to his tasks in 1995. He got his latest positions late last year.

"It will be the people in the industry I will miss the most," Mr Piper, 55, told CBW. "I am sorry to be leaving the industry."



Barry Arnold: promotion

Change of roles at Stagecoach

STAGECOACH East London/Selkent have a new md following the departure of chairman Roger Bowker to Stagecoach Swebus which resulted in a minor cascade of promotions.

Operations director Barry Arnold is now md of both companies, the chairman's post is taken by Tony Cox - currently chairman of Stagecoach West companies. To accommodate the work, Mr Cox has relinquished his posts as chairman of both Stagecoach United Counties and Cambus.

Mr Arnold started his bus career with LT, working with the GLC and in the Far East, before becoming operations director of East London in 1989.

'Vacuum' as Stroud retires

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers, Alan Stroud, is to retire in January after nine years in his post.

Mr Stroud, BSc (Eng), CEng, FIMechE, FIRTE, MIMgt, was responsible for raising the professionalism and status of IRTE from 1989: "There will always be more to do, more challenges, more opportunities, and this must be so if the institute is to continue to be successful," he told council chairman Doug Sharp on announcing his retirement.

"His retirement creates a vacuum that will be very difficult to fill," said Mr Sharp.

Players kick start skills sponsorship

SKILLS of Nottingham enlisted the help of Nottingham Forest players to kick-start the NSPCC regional prize draw.

Sponsored by Skills to the tune of three top-quality family holidays and a range of runners-up prizes, the draw raises money with ticket sales through Skills Travel Shops and Skills' drivers. The draw is on 16 December.

Blowing the starting whistle were Forest players Steve Chattle, Chris-Bart-Williams, Colin Cooper, Ian Woan, Des Lyttle and manager Dave Bassett, shown here with Skills staff including Nigel Skill (third from right).



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